

THE MEMOIRS OF QUEEN HORTENSE

VOLUME I

EDITED BY
PRINCE NAPOLEON

WITH FOREWORD AND NOTES BY
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FOREWORD BY JEAN HANOTEAU

WHEN in 1815 the Bourbons returned to France, Queen Hortense (whose only crime was to bear a name which still made Europe tremble) became for some time a wanderer in search of rest and safety. In December of that same year she believed that she had found a suitable asylum at Constance in the Grand Duchy of Baden. But the hatred of the Allies was on the alert, so that despite the Grand Duke's personal liking for her, despite the friendship of his wife, the Grande Duchesse Stéphanie de Beauharnais, the diplomacy of the Holy Alliance made this refuge precarious, and on February 10th, 1817, she bought the castle of Arenenberg on Lake Constance. But her right to settle on even this small plot of land was contested, and in the end it was the courageous friendship of the King of Bavaria which allowed the step-daughter of Napoleon to acquire the Waldeck haus in Heil-Kreuz Strasse at Augsburg. She took possession on May 6th, 1817.

It was at Constance during the dreary winter of 1816-17, and while her fate was still uncertain, that the Queen began to compile her Memoirs.

As she was intensely sensitive, animated, as her mother had been, by an irresistible wish to please and to be loved, Hortense suffered from the slightest criticism. And because she was kind, and conscious that she had never knowingly harmed anyone, she wished public opinion to do her justice. Fifteen years of greatness had not steeled her against malevolence; indeed, her delusion was always to set this down to ignorance alone. Her friends had changed her motto, "Unknown, undisturbed,"

into "More known, more beloved," and she had joyfully adopted the new reading

Thus in her retirement, possessed by the desire to justify everything that she had ever done, she devoted many a long hour to the attempt to make herself "more known by various means"

She tells us that as early as the time of the imperial divorce, "hearing someone blame her brother for having consented to it," and "amazed at the difficulty experienced by truth in making itself known," she had jotted down the details of that event but had not gone any further

Already in 1812, while the Queen was taking the waters at Aix-la-Chapelle, the Comtesse de Nansouty had urged her to write the story of her life, and as she protested that she should never have the patience, Mme. de Nansouty proposed to write from her dictation "The next day"—as we shall read later on—"she brought me the narrative of certain incidents of my childhood that I had related on the preceding day. But it was too lively it did not sound like me. So, though I was alive to the merit of this account, I confessed that I did not care to hear myself speaking as I should never have spoken, and the work stopped short on the first page, which she has kept"

Louise Cochelet, the Queen's companion, a faithful friend, though perhaps not always a wise one, tells us how these pages, now published by the Prince Napoleon, were composed at Constance. "The Queen, as was her habit, spent the mornings alone in her rooms finding her own occupation. And it was then that the wish to refute the untruths and slanders which had appeared during the two past years suggested to her the idea of writing her Memoirs. It was for her a question of conscience that she should restate events as they really took place and refute the calumnies which had been brought against the Emperor. The misinterpretation of his motives, the distorted accounts of his actions could not be set right by anyone better than by her, who, having always lived near him, knew his ideas and his character. While as for the slanders of which she had been the subject, she felt so far above such baseness that she believed that all she need do to destroy them was

to set forth the facts truthfully, and to confide a simple record of all her actions to her paper. This done, she was relieved and thought no more about it."¹

Mademoiselle Cochelet adds, "The Memoirs of the Queen begun at Constance in 1816 will not see the light till after her death. She has revised them since, looking back over all the years previous to that in which she began them. It is a legacy she has prepared, and which she will leave to historians whom time shall have rendered impartial."²

The Queen's manuscript was dated at its completion Augsburg, 1820. But on November 19th, 1830, Mademoiselle Valérie Masuyer, who had just assumed the post of reader to the Queen, tells us how the latter organized her life in Rome and says, "She wishes to stay at home till three o'clock every day in order to revise the Memoirs she began in 1816 and abandoned in 1820."³

Again, Buchon, who spent the winter of 1835 at Arenenberg, writes, "Sometimes the Queen devotes her leisure to adding a page to her Memoirs, a sort of monologue, an outpouring of the soul without fear of a stranger's eye."⁴ Numerous traces of these successive revisions are to be found in the original manuscripts, as will be seen later.

The Memoirs which we are about to read are not the only attempt made by the Queen to re-establish the truth.

After the misleading interpretations placed on her tour through Italy, France and England in 1831, she took up her pen once more, and going back to the point where her former narrative broke off, she briefly retraced the events that had happened since that time. Buchon informs us that "The Queen was so kind as to read to me the simple, elegant and pathetic account she had composed of this journey. Everything is explained, everything becomes clear and easy to understand. This narrative was

¹ *Mémoires sur la Reine Hortense et la Famille Impériale* par Mlle Cochelet (Madame Parquin) Paris, Ladvocat, 1836-1838, 4 vols in-octavo, Vol IV, page 299).

² Mlle Cochelet, *loc cit* Vol IV, page 301

³ *La Reine Hortense et le Prince Louis* Extracts from the diary of Mademoiselle Valérie Masuyer, published by Colonel Patrice Mahon in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, August 15, 1914, page 834

⁴ *Quelques souvenirs de courses en Suisse et dans le pays de Baden* by S. A. C. Buchon, Paris, Gide 1836, in-octavo, page 246.

written solely for her personal satisfaction and as a continuation to her interesting Memoirs, of which she had been good enough to read me some exceedingly interesting passages in 1821. She did not care to display her private sorrows to the public, and had there not appeared at that time the fictitious memoirs in which (with the best possible intentions) she had been represented as speaking, writing, and acting as she certainly never dreamed of speaking, writing and acting, it would have been difficult to conquer this repugnance."¹

These scruples having been overcome, the narrative referred to above appeared in 1834 in Paris under the title of *La Reine Hortense en Italie, en France et en Angleterre Fragments extraits de ses Mémoires inédits écrits par elle-même*²

Research might possibly bring to light further traces of the Queen's thoughts and intentions³

In November, 1836, the publisher, Ladvocat, produced the first two volumes of the *Mémoires sur la Reine Hortense et la Famille Impériale par Mademoiselle Cochelet, lectrice de la Reine* (Madame Parquin)⁴

In a 'Note to the Public' the publisher states that about November 12th, 1836, a postman from one of the

¹ Allusion to the *Mémoires sur la Reine Hortense aujourd'hui Duchesse de Saint-Lex* collected and published by the Baron W. F. Van Scheelken, Paris Canel 1833, 2 volumes in-octavo which had just appeared. Referring to the title of this work Hortense in a letter dated July 8th, 1833, wrote to Madame Salvage "At least it was very lucky that you arrived in time to call them Memoirs on instead of by." Again, on October 31st 1833, the Queen writing to the wife of Marshal Ney "I suppose you have read those stupid memoirs that appeared about me. They have decided me to publish the account of my sad tour through France which I wrote this winter" (Notes on autograph letters sold at auction, collected by Nodl Charavay)

² The first edition appeared in Paris Lavavasseur 1834 in-octavo x 324 pages. The same year these fragments were reprinted in the series *Mémoires pour tous Collection de Souvenirs Contemporains* Paris Lavavasseur 1834 in-octavo Vol I pages 67-240. In 1845 Temblaire again gave lengthy extracts in his *Revue de l'Empire* 3rd year pages 97-139 312, 313, 314. Finally a last edition appeared in Paris Boudilliat, 1861 in twelvmo 284 pages.

³ It is known that it was the Queen herself who, in order to reply to passages in the *Mémoires* relating to opinions expressed by Napoleon at Saint Helena on Josephine and on Hortense's marriage had published by Dezel in 1819 the *Lettres de Napoléon à Joséphine et Lettres de Joséphine à Napoléon et à sa suite* 2 volumes in-octavo. She also was instrumental in the publication of the *Correspondance de Valentin Campion avec le Prince Hortense* published by J. A. C. Duchon, Paris Lavavasseur 1833, 2 volumes in-octavo.

⁴ The *Journaux des Débats* announced on November 19, 1836 that they would be placed on sale November 25 at the price of 16 francs or 18 francs, as time

important stage-coach offices situated in the Rue Notre-Dame-des-Victoires left the manuscript at his shop. The following day a friend called to explain that the Memoirs must be printed before the 25th of that same month, and that this was the only condition attached to their publication.

Notices of this kind must always be mistrusted, for did not the desire for publicity, the wish to excite the curiosity of the public, and the mania for hoaxes, exist long before our day? But whether these particulars were real or invented, who could have been the sender of the mysterious packet?

Louise Cochelet had died at Wolfesberg near Arenenberg on May 7th, 1835. Her heirs were her husband and a daughter, who was still a child. Her husband had been arrested with Prince Louis-Napoleon at Strasbourg, October 30th, 1836, and as he was to be tried by court martial he was confined to prison until his acquittal on January 18th, 1837. Consequently he was not at large when Ladvocat received his visitor.

Neither of Madame Parquin's brothers appear to have had anything to do with the publication of her Memoirs; the announcement of their publication, which appeared on the fourth page of the *Journal des Débats*, November 19th, called forth a letter to the Editor, printed in the issue of the 24th, signed by Charles Cochelet, paymaster-general of the Ardennes. It read, "As the issue of your paper appearing on the 19th of this month contained, to my amazement, a notice of the forthcoming publication of Memoirs signed by Mademoiselle Cochelet, kindly be good enough to announce that this publication is made without the knowledge of her family, who probably would not have given their consent."

Ladvocat replied by referring to Madame Parquin's other brother, Adrien, at that time Consul General in Bucarest, and published the following statement in the *Journal des Débats*, November 25th: "After a visit, the day before yesterday, from Monsieur Adrien Cochelet, I was far from expecting the appearance of the letter from his elder brother. . . . Allow me to inform you, sir, that the Memoirs

of Mademoiselle Cochelet were brought to me by a person who, when the writer was on her death-bed, received her authority to publish them. I thought that I had enlightened Monsieur Adrien Cochelet sufficiently on the origin of these memoirs not to be accused by his brother, the paymaster of the Ardennes, of having undertaken their publication from purely mercenary motives. In regard to the editing of the *Memoirs of Mademoiselle Cochelet* I am surprised that the author's brothers are the only persons unaware of the existence of this singular and entertaining portrait gallery, which all the distinguished guests at the château of Wolsberg in Thurgovia could appreciate through the readings which Mademoiselle Cochelet herself made from it. It would be impossible to invent many things related by the author.

This reply did not disarm Charles Cochelet. *Ladvoeat* placed his volumes on sale November 26th, a day later than had been announced, and on that same day they were seized by the authorities,¹ a measure taken "as a result of a discussion regarding the ownership of the manuscript,"² if the newspapers are to be believed.

Some effective outside influence must have intervened, for the public was soon able to purchase the work, and the two last volumes appeared without let or hindrance in December, 1837, under the date 1838.³

No doubt the publisher's anonymous correspondent was the Queen herself, or at all events the package had been sent at her instigation.

The appearance of the work brought an opportune assistance to the unfortunate companions of her son, who were involved in his Strasbourg adventure. Moreover, Hortense was not a stranger to the composition of all the pages which were to appear over the signature of her companion.

It is impossible, if one compares the *Memoirs of Cochelet*

¹ *Le Droit Journal des Tribunaux* issue of 2 October 27 1836 1st year No. 357.

² *La Cause de 1830* clipping quoted by *Le Droit* in its issue of 4 November 30 1836 1st year No. 360.

³ Volumes III and IV are announced in the *Journal des Débats* December 9, 1837 on sale at *Ladvoeat*, Place du Palais-National.

for the years 1814, 1815 and 1816 and those of the Queen covering the same period, not to be struck with many analogies in their texts. As a rule their reports agree more closely than is usually the case when two witnesses testify to the same event. Of course this might be explained by the fact that Mademoiselle Cochelet was familiar with the unpublished writing of her mistress and had followed their structure.¹

There can be no doubt that the main portion of the work was really written by the Queen's companion. Certain pages could have been written by no one else. Those, for instance, where Louise gives rein to her love of intrigue, where she naively displays her satisfaction at meeting prominent people, in short where she does not hide any of the faults which were just those with which Hortense reproached her.

Also it is beyond question that she wrote down some of her own recollections. To those who knew her character the reverse would have seemed surprising. On this point we have not only the evidence of Ladvocat, but even the confession of her brother Charles, who, in his letter to the *Journal des Débats* quoted above, admits: "It is true, Monsieur, that my sister, at the time of her death, left a large number of letters, the existence of which was due to the brilliant acquaintances she made in connection with her former position. Perhaps even some recollections written in her handwriting may have been found among her papers intended as a precious inheritance to her daughter. But certainly she never planned to use the letters, unedited and unselected, as the basis for a volume of memoirs. The letters, although from people of high rank, were only of personal interest. Even had she decided to undertake such a publication, and I doubt this very strongly, she would have done it with that reserve and tact which distinguished her. I cannot say if these qualities will be found in the present Memoirs,

¹ This was what Aubenas thought judging from verbal reports he had heard "Mademoiselle Cochelet had at her disposal the unpublished Memoirs of the Queen Hortense and, we are told, used them extensively" (Joseph Aubenas, *Histoire de l'Impératrice Joséphine* Paris, Amyot, 1859, 2 Vols., in-octavo, Vol II, page 541)

which are probably written in part by an unknown hand "

But through all the elaborately cautious sentences framed to cover the responsibility of the paymaster of the Ardennes and to protect him from the protests of persons in high places, it will be noticed that he does not deny the existence of a manuscript revised and corrected "by an unknown hand" That hand was the Queen's Hortense had embroidered on the canvas left by her companion

Proof of this is to be found in the mysterious task to which she devoted herself previous to the publication of the memoirs of Madame Parquin, and of which Mademoiselle Masuyer gives us a glimpse when she writes, under date of May 21st, 1836, "We have spoken of Madame d'Abrantès, who made herself feared by her skits on her circle, and of the *Memoires Parquin*, in which the Queen airs her little grievances She would have considered it beneath her dignity to mention them in her own Memoirs "

The journal of Mademoiselle Masuyer, who acted as secretary to the Queen in connection with these memoirs, refers several times to the importance which Hortense attached to the work, and on October 19th, 1837, a fortnight after the death of her mistress, she relates that "after luncheon the Prince (Louis-Napoleon) asked me for my rough draft of the *Memoires de Madame Parquin*, and I brought him the four thick volumes, that he might burn my four years work It grieved me I should have liked to keep them " A little further on, Mlle. Masuyer adds "The Prince sent the rest of the papers to be burnt I greatly fear this was not done with discretion Until the Day of Judgment I shall always deny having had anything to do with these Memoirs "

Does this refer to the rough draft of the four volumes bearing Mademoiselle Cochelet's name as author, and

13 Mademoiselle Masuyer *Feuille des Deux Mondes* November 15 1913 page 144

14 Mademoiselle Masuyer *Feuille des Deux Mondes* March 1 1914 page 14
The publication of the complete text of Mademoiselle Masuyer's memoirs will presumably solve the little problem we bring up here At all events Cochelet is mistaken according to the evidence on hand when he identifies her and Lacaze as the presumed author of the 3 volumes by Mademoiselle Cochelet

which appeared in 1836 and 1837? Was the Queen preparing other extracts revised and edited from the papers belonging to her companion? The first hypothesis seems the more plausible, but, be that as it may, it cannot be denied that in the *Memoirs* published under the name of Louise there were many pages in which the Queen herself said what she wished to have told.

We may also mention that the biographical notice on Prince Napoleon-Louis, which appeared after his death at Forlì in 1831, and signed H. de Roccaserra, was really written by Hortense, who composed it the day after his decease. On March 29th, the indiscreet Mademoiselle Masuyer, writing from Ancona, says: "Roccaserra has left, taking with him a copy of the notice she wrote about her son. He will have it printed in Corsica, and so shall we in France."¹

II

Queen Hortense wrote her recollections with her own hand, on sheets of letter paper of the size generally used at that time (13½ centimetres by 20 centimetres: 5 by 8 inches), or other loose leaves. Some of these sheets, with many erasures, have been preserved, but the larger portion have disappeared. Happily the Prince Napoleon's archives contain four copies, some of them complete, the others unfinished or abridged.

The principal copy is dated "Augsbourg 1820." It

¹ This article was printed in Corfu on April 15, 1831. It seems to have been rather widely distributed under the Second Empire, as it is quoted by all the biographers who at that time spoke of the Queen. To-day it has totally disappeared. We have been unable to find it in any library in Paris, not even the Bibliothèque Nationale, not even in the collection of Monsieur Frédéric Masson, nor in the Library of Ajaccio. The Prince Napoleon did not possess a copy. Nor have we found any trace either of any French edition unless it be the same as a plain single sheet of paper in-quarto, printed on both sides, without place or date of publication, and bearing no indication of the publisher, entitled *Notice sur Napoléon-Louis Bonaparte, traduite de l'italien*. The copy of this broadside which we had in our hands came from the papers of the Empress Eugénie.

Still according to Masuyer, Hortense during her stay in England wrote an article to be published in a newspaper (*Revue des Deux Mondes*, June 15, 1915, page 865). She must have prepared similar articles on several occasions, for a certain number of notes on political matters written in her handwriting and preserved in Prince Napoleon's archives, appear to be preliminary outlines for such articles.

is signed by the Queen and is entirely transcribed by her secretary, Mademoiselle Elisa de Courtin. This manuscript, which is unquestionably the most complete and the most carefully revised, consists of 550 pages.

A second copy, executed about the same time, or even earlier, was written by a secretary, who in all probability belonged to the Queen's immediate household. The Queen evidently worked on this document, for on the sides of the pages are numerous additions all in her handwriting.

The archives of Prince Napoleon contain two other copies of the Memoirs. The first entirely written by Madame Salvage de Faverolles, who attached herself to the fortunes of the exiled Queen at quite a late date, and a certain number of pages relating to the home life of the Queen have been eliminated. Here again there are sentences and paragraphs added by the Queen, which are in her handwriting.

Finally, the last copy, also in the writing of Madame Salvage, is on loose sheets of letter paper stamped with her monogram, D S¹. This document, on which one finds no traces of the Queen's intervention, was made at a date posterior to 1830².

¹ Monsieur Raoul Bonnet, whose authority in the matter of autographs and general scholarship is widely known and appreciated, has with a kindness for which we are infinitely grateful after a minute examination of the handwritings and a comparison between them and manuscripts with documents of whose origin we are certain, confirmed all the conclusions herewith presented. His help has been precious in clearing up points we were anxious to elucidate and in eliminating any chance of error. The notes written by Madame Salvage are copies of notes written by the Queen on the other manuscripts of which we shall speak presently or on loose leaves which have remained attached to these manuscripts.

For the convenience of the reader we have adopted the following titles referring to these four manuscripts. The first, most complete one is called the "Red Manuscript" the second is called the "Manuscript in two volumes" or "Second Manuscript" the third the "Green Manuscript" on account of the colour of the case in which it is kept the fourth the "Salvage Manuscript". At the time of the publication of selections from the Memoirs in the "Filles des Deux Mondes" circumstances and the death of Prince Napoleon have not allowed us a minute examination of the various manuscripts, we could not state with certainty who made the copies. Since then thanks to the kindness of Her Royal and Imperial Highness the Princess Napoleon we have had time to study carefully the originals. At the same time the letters of letters by Mademoiselle de Courtin and by Madame Salvage have thanks to the help of Messieurs de Charavay and Raoul Bonnet ceased our list debts to vanish.

III

The Queen till the time of her death, which occurred on October 5th, 1837, enjoyed reading her Memoirs to the friends who had remained faithful to her in her exile and to distinguished guests who paid homage to her in her misfortune.

As early as 1821, Buchon had been the first person privileged to hear certain selections "of the highest historic interest,"¹ and one after another Châteaubriand, Madame Recamier, Casimir Delavigne, Alexandre Dumas, Madame Campan, Coulman and many others enjoyed the same privilege.

When the Queen became aware that her sufferings were drawing to a close she was careful not to forget these confidences, and on April 3rd, 1837, fearing the results of an operation which Lisfranc did not dare perform, she drew up her will. At that moment she despaired of ever seeing Louis-Napoleon again, for the French Government had sent him to America after his unsuccessful adventure at Strasbourg. Thus Hortense included the sentence, "Madame Salvage shall preserve my memoirs until she is able to hand them back to my son," among her last wishes.

There can be no doubt that Madame Salvage de Faverolles, whose devotion to her sovereign is well known, faithfully performed the mission entrusted to her at the earliest opportunity. Moreover, the return of the Prince to his mother's bedside two months before she bequeathed her last considerably reduced the rôle and powers of the executrix.

Monsieur Fourmestraux² says, however, that Madame Salvage kept the manuscript and confided it before she died to Mademoiselle Masuyer with instructions to restore it to Prince Louis. This delay in carrying out the Queen's wishes is the less easy to explain as by the mother's will the future Napoleon III knew of the existence of the manuscript. Perhaps Fourmestraux is alluding to the fact that he made it

¹ Buchon quoted above, page 145.

² Eugène Fourmestraux, *La Reine Hortense*, Paris, Flammarion, 1907, in-octavo, page 261.

Madame Salvage without the Queen's knowledge or consent, and which she lacked the courage to give up sooner.

Be this as it may, Napoleon III took possession of the *Mémoires*, and his annotations prove that he read them and re-read them. After his death the Empress Eugénie preserved them. The care with which she herself replaced the pages missing from one of the copies proves the importance that she attached to this relic. After her death the different manuscripts entered the archives of Prince Napoleon, who decided to have their text published.¹

IV

The Prince was preparing this edition when a mortal illness removed him from the esteem and affection of his faithful followers and from the admiration of those who had the honour of working with him. He brought to the performance of this task his qualities of order and method, his passionate devotion for all that concerned the glory of France, and the intimate knowledge and understanding of historical events, whether great or small, due to his long and studious researches.

Although the Prince did not live to see the fulfilment of his last wishes, his desires have been respectfully and completely executed.

The text reproduced is that of the volume which we have called the Red Manuscript (Augsburg, 1820). In all four copies the narrative of the Duchesse de Saint Leu is an uninterrupted one, without division into chapters. It has seemed possible for the purposes of greater clarity, and

¹ Previous to their being placed in the archives of Prince Napoleon these manuscripts were shown either completely or partially to various people. Mr. Blanchard Jerrold seems to have had them lent to him by Napoleon III when he was writing his important work "The Life of Napoleon III." Monsieur Henri Houssaye was acquainted with at least the parts dealing with the period immediately after Waterloo and he makes quotations—which occasionally are not correct—from them. Houssaye refers to them as the *Mémoires de Madame de X*. Monsieur Léodéte Blais also knew at least part of Hortense's text and he says, "What a shame it is that it is impossible to publish the *Mémoires* in which the Queen reveals her character and in which she justifies her mistakes. Such a publication would be the best answer given to her." (*Napoleon et sa Famille*, Paris, Grasset, 1927, 1932, 1933) Vol. 1, in octavo, Vol. VIII, page 165.

without falsifying the author's meaning, to make these divisions.

In giving to the public the *Mémoires de la Reine Hortense* exactly as she recorded them, in offering to students of history these intimate revelations as set down by her royal hand, Prince Napoleon did a service not only to history, but also to the reputation of a princess who has too often been harshly criticized, to the memory of an unfortunate Queen, to the remembrance of an exquisite woman.

Like the Emperor, whose brilliance was reflected on her, and whose farewell smile she received as he left France for ever, the Queen of Holland has nothing to lose by having the limelight turned on all her actions, and even on her weaknesses.

This becomes clear as one looks through these volumes, in which she goes forth to meet the difficulties of her task. She knew what the world had said of her, she was aware of the reproaches, founded and unfounded, of which she was the object. And often between the lines traced by her pen we can divine her anxiety to refute certain implications, with a movement that is sometimes disdainful, but that never lacks nobility.

v

It only remains for the modest collaborator whom the Prince Napoleon was good enough to associate with him in his labours, to express his deep gratitude towards him who bore with such noble dignity a name burdened by glorious tradition.

In the examination of documents, in the delicate task of preparing the notes, the Prince's sound judgment, his profound knowledge, his straightforwardness, and his unerring tact were infallible guides which his kindly nature made easy and agreeable to follow.

The author of these lines, who has carried on with enthusiasm the work so pleasantly begun has, after the cruel bereavement of May 3rd, 1926, found a no less

precious collaborator and a no less accomplished leader in the person of Her Imperial and Royal Highness Princess Napoleon, who, having constantly shared the intellectual life of her august spouse, took up the pen that had fallen from his hand and completed what he had begun. But will she allow us to say more regarding her share in a work which occupied the last thoughts of the great Frenchman who has so recently been taken from us?

JEAN HANOTEAU

PARIS, 8th February, 1927

ff Page 26.

[illegible]

CHAPTER I

EARLY YEARS—THE REVOLUTION—THE REIGN OF TERROR (1783-1794)

Parentage—Earliest memories—Visit to Martinique—Mistaken Philanthropy—Flight to France—In Paris during the Revolution—Arrest of Joséphine and her husband—Revolutionary festivities—An alarming encounter—The Fête of the Supreme Being—Execution of de Beauharnais

My life has been so brilliant and so full of misfortune that it has become a subject of public interest. I have been praised or blamed according to circumstances, but always in excess, because my high rank has allowed few persons to know me well enough to judge me truly, and I believe that I have deserved neither too gratifying eulogy nor very severe criticism.

My heart has always led me in all my actions, great and small, and can a loyal heart lead one astray? The greatest enthusiasm for all that is good has upheld me in the midst of injustice and reverses, and this lofty sentiment has been my strength and my comfort at all times. I want to be understood by my friends, by some few sensitive and lofty souls. I go into the smallest details of my life saying: "Behold me, judge me, be sorry for me, I ring true: love me, esteem me, for this is my heart's desire, this would be the charm of my existence." I write for my friends and for them alone.

My brother knows me: Have I a thought that our mutual confidence and warm affection have not shared? As for my children, it is not from me that they ought to learn the unhappiness their father caused me. I have suffered so much for them, I have so cherished them that if ever they know the truth they will love me the more dearly. And as for myself, it will be sad, no doubt, to retrace

the best years of my youth, spent in weeping, but there will be a sort of comfort in re-discovering, amid the dangers I have been able to avert, the little good I have been able to perform

My grandfather, the Marquis de Beauharnais,* was Governor-General of the French colonies in the West Indies. While living at Martinique he became intimate with the family of the Counts Tascher de la Pagerie, which, hailing from Blois in Touraine, had settled in the West Indies and owned important estates there. The Marquis de Beauharnais married Mademoiselle de Chastullé, the rich heiress of a large property on the island of Santo-Domingo, and by this marriage he had two sons,* of whom my father, the younger of the two, was born at Martinique in [left blank in the original],* and while still very young returned to France with my grandfather on his recall.

About the same time* one of the desdemoiselles Tascher de la Pagerie married a Monsieur Renaudin and also settled in France. In order still further to cement the bonds of friendship uniting the two families, it was decided that my father should marry a member of the same family. My mother could not be asked for as she was the youngest† of the three sisters†, but the ship bearing his proposal arrived just as the eldest girl was dying, and afterwards when the family in France had asked to have the second sister sent over, the news that she had fallen into a decline since her sister's death caused the youngest girl to be selected in her place. Her father accompanied her to France, where she became the Vicomtesse de Beauharnais. Thus did Fate single out my mother. She was fifteen and my father eighteen when they were married in Paris in [blank in the original] † My brother was born in 1781 † and I in 1783 †

The brilliance of my mother's social position could not make her forget her country and her family † She had left an aged mother, whom she wished to see once more. And

* Josephine was the eldest of the three sisters. But the version given here is so doubtful that to fill in her christening. She was always sensitive and nervous about her age. (Trans.)

* See Note p. 252

† See Note p. 251

it may be, too, that she felt the need of a diversion from a feeling difficult to overcome and very natural. For my father, handsome in person, remarkably gifted and accomplished, was greatly in request among the foremost people both at Court and in society. His wife, whose oversensitive nature made her too susceptible, was wounded and even jealous, and sought a remedy in the temporary separation of a voyage. My mother and I sailed alone.* I was four years old at the time. We embarked at Le Havre, where a violent squall threatened to capsize our vessel almost in port. On arriving at Martinique we were received by my mother's family with transports of joy. The quiet life that we led sometimes in one house, sometimes in another, must have suited my mother, for we remained more than three years out of France.

I can recall only one particular incident of our stay at Martinique, but it is vividly imprinted on my imagination. I was five years old, and had never shed a tear. Everybody had spoiled me, and no harsh word had ever rebuked me nor thwarted one of my wishes. One day, while we were on my grandmother's plantation, I was playing beside a table on which she was counting money. Now and then a coin fell to the floor and I hastened to pick it up and give it back to her. I saw her make a dozen little piles of copper pennies, which she placed on a chair when she left the room, taking the rest of the money with her. I do not know how I conceived the idea that she had given me these pennies to dispose of, but I felt so convinced of this that I gathered the separate piles into my skirt, which I tucked up so as to form a sort of pocket. Then I set out with my treasure without feeling the least remorse, so persuaded was I that the money really belonged to me. I found one of the mulatto house-servants and said to him, "John, look at all the money Grandmother has given me for the poor blacks. Take me to their cabins so that I can give it to them." The heat was burning as the sun was at the zenith, but I was too happy to be able to wait an instant. John and I discussed the best means of doing the greatest good to the greatest number of poor people. I went from cabin to cabin,

* See Note p 263.

my money still in my tucked-up skirt, which I held with a firm hand, that I opened only to take out the sums John had decided I ought to give. My mother's old nurse received a double share *

When my money was gone, and I was surrounded by all these blacks, who kissed my hands and feet, I returned to the house triumphant, filled with joy and pride at all these benedictions. But at home everything was in a state of commotion. My grandmother was looking for her money, and the poor servants were all quaking lest they should be accused. In a flash I realized the truth and, with despair, was obliged to admit my guilt. I confessed at once to my grandmother, but what that confession cost me! I had lied and I had stolen, and I heard myself reproached with it!

In truth my imagination was responsible. I had seen the piles of coppers set apart—therefore they must be for the poor, and to leave them on a chair within my reach was to charge me with the distribution. That was what I had fancied, and out of these fictions I had made a reality. The humiliation I suffered from this mistake was so intense that it must have influenced my character. All my life I have mistrusted my imagination and I believe I can declare sincerely that, since that far-off day, I have never told a lie or even sought to embellish truth.

The Revolution caused disturbances in the colony. Monsieur de Viomesnil and Monsieur de Damas in turn became governors, but the latter was obliged to leave precipitately. We were living at the Government House at the time. One night my mother received word that the cannons were to open fire on the town of Fort Royal the following day. She set out instantly to seek refuge aboard a frigate, whose captain she knew. As we crossed the fields, which are called savannahs, a cannon ball fell close beside us. The next day the town was seized by the revolutionists, and the French ships were ordered to return to their anchorage under threat of being fired on by all the guns of the fort. The crew of our vessel announced their intention of returning to France, and promptly left the coast, but the threat was carried out, balls were fired.

Not a single one touched us: destiny spared us. So here we were unexpectedly embarked without having taken leave of anyone.

The frigate on which we found ourselves was the *Sensible*, bound for Toulon. The voyage was favourable as far as the Straits of Gibraltar, but there our pilot made a mistake and steered too near the African coast. We touched bottom, and five minutes later the ship was aground. Sailors, passengers and children all tugged at the ropes and once more we escaped danger.

On her arrival at Toulon (early in November, 1790) my mother learned the events that were exciting France. The Revolution had broken out and my father had become a prominent figure of the political party whose doctrines he had espoused. His brother* had joined an opposing group while my grandfather had retired to Fontainebleau accompanied by his old friend, Madame Renaudin, one of my mother's aunts. We joined them at once, and soon my brother, who had been a boarder at the Collège d'Harcourt† left school to join us.

I was too young to understand what was going on around us, and can recall only a few episodes of the days of the Revolution. At the time of the flight of the King and his arrest at Varennes, my father was President of the Constituent Assembly. His firm attitude, the manner in which he maintained order in Paris aroused a momentary enthusiasm. Even in our retreat at Fontainebleau, whenever people caught sight of my brother and myself standing at a window someone would cry out, "Look at our Dauphin and Dauphine." When this occurred we retired hastily, as unable to understand the cause of the demonstration as to surmise what the future held in store for us.

At the close of the session of the Constituent Assembly my father left to take command of the Army of the North with the title of general. He wished Eugène to return to school, and my mother decided that it was time to begin my education also. Madame de Chabrillan, abbess of the convent of the Abbaye-aux-Bois, was a connection of my family, and it was to her care I was confided.† Then my

* See Note p 263
Vol. I

† See Note p 264

mother left Fontainebleau and settled in Paris in order that she might see us both more frequently

One morning a few months later, my mother sent for me. It was the tenth of August (1792). The mob was attacking the Tuileries, and Paris was in an uproar. On such a dreadful day my mother wished to be with her children, and shortly afterwards the schools and convents were destroyed.

In the midst of the tragic scenes that succeeded one another in Paris it was difficult for parents to attend to their children's education, and my mother's companion, Mademoiselle de Lannoy, acted as my governess. Well born, well educated, and possessed of several talents, her lessons would have proved useful to me had not her attention been entirely absorbed by politics.

The decree* which excluded the nobility from the army obliged my father to leave the Rhine, where he had recently succeeded Monsieur de Custine as commander-in-chief. He withdrew to his estate at La Ferté-Beauharnais, where, after a short time, he was arrested* and taken to the Carmelite prison in Paris. My mother could not even learn of what he was accused, and in the end she, too, was arrested; indeed, the only favour she obtained was that of being confined in the same prison as her husband*.

What was our despair when one morning we learned that she had come weeping to kiss us, and that she had left without disturbing our slumber*. "Let them sleep," she had said to our governess, "I could not bear to see them cry. I should not have the strength to part from them." Our awakening was dreadful. By this we became desolate, bereft at once of our father and our mother. This was the first sorrow of my life.

My brother, despite his youth, felt all the force of a noble nature, and was fired with so intense a longing to save our parents that he was convinced that he could do so. He rushed off alone to see Tallien and tell him of our misfortune. I waited impatiently, and to me my brother's eloquence seemed irresistible. But alas! he who would have been willing to help us was already powerless to do so. Terror had frozen every heart. All seemed

to have shut out mercy and justice, and all that is to innocence was to perish.

Our daily occupation was to send our parents the things they might be in need of. Entrance to their prison was forbidden us, and correspondence soon prohibited. We tried to replace this by words written below the list of articles in good included in the package, "Your children are to efface health," but the gate-keeper was cruel enough to strike the list them. As a last resource we took turns in copying sure our so that the sight of our two handwritings might assure our parents that we were both still alive.

It was decreed that all children of noble birth must learn a trade. My brother, in spite of our governess's despair, chose that of carpenter.

We had at one time lived with the Princess of our Hohenzollern, and although we now had a home brother own we spent every Sunday with her. Her mother. She had been arrested at the same time as our father. Her loneliness liked to see us often to break the monotony of her isolation for and forget her troubles in the proofs of her affection.

us. To us, in our isolation, she was a moral support, a great

About this time an order was given in Paris for a great use was patriotic banquet. On this solemn day every householders to have one sole table spread in the street, where to sup and servants, men, women and children were all possible together under penalty of arrest. Evasion was not at door, for, by decree, a bill was pasted on to every front door, where the name of every inhabitant had to be inserted, described. The mansion in which we lodged was nearly destroyed of the for my mother was in prison and so was the whole house. friendly West Indian family, who lived in the same house. Our man-servant, our chambermaid, the porter, and his wife, our governess, and my brother and I represented the householders on this occasion.

Our table was laid before the door, and we were about to sit down when we heard ourselves challenged by the were at dreaded epithet of aristocrats. It seems that we had way, fault in not placing the table in the middle of the road. It was fine, an error we hastened to remedy. The weather was in the

streets, some eating, some strolling about out of curiosity, formed a curious scene. To make it more brilliant the windows of the houses should have been illuminated, because in the residential districts the streets were too dark.

After supper we asked Mademoiselle de Lannoy to take us to see some more popular and bustling district of the city. In the commercial section the tables were lined up one after the other, and some were decorated with a roof of green boughs with very good effect. But real gaiety was lacking to the feast. Every face wore an expression of uneasiness. Poorly dressed men loafed about the town drinking, singing and shouting, terrifying the honest townspeople, who were by no means reassured by their noisy enjoyment. In the poorer quarters there was more natural good-humour. As we passed, a cobbler in his work-a-day clothes rose from the table, came up to our governess and kissed her. Of course, as she hurried us home she seized the occasion to say that "A thing like that could never have happened under the old régime."

My brother, as he witnessed the discomfiture of Mademoiselle de Lannoy, glanced at me maliciously, the more so as the good woman was extremely plain. Eugène claimed that the shoemaker's action was prompted simply by a desire to correct Mademoiselle's haughtiness of bearing. I answered, "I'm very glad to be only a little girl for that horrid man might have tried to kiss me, too." "I should never have allowed such a thing," answered Eugène, drawing himself up with the full dignity of his twelve years.

One day, I was returning to the Rue Saint Dominique* after paying a visit to the Princess Hohenollern. Her youngest chambermaid was with me, my brother having stayed at home to do his lessons. As we turned a corner we caught sight of a crowd of men advancing toward us to the sounds of a loud band. Everyone hid withdrawn so as not to be on their route. At their approach doors and windows closed precipitately, and not even the porters looked to see what was happening. Terrible! the maid and I found ourselves thus absolutely alone in

the street and, daring neither to advance nor retreat, we huddled under the recess of a carriage entrance. I never found out what this mob was. I can only remember seeing a gang of bare-armed men go past me carrying a statue of Liberty and singing *Ça ira* and the *Marseillaise*. I was still a little child, but their wild appearance made me tremble, though I did not know what it meant, and I was still more terrified when I saw them stop in front of the house opposite us, and with violent oaths and curses try to break in the door, call for ladders, accuse the owners of being aristocrats, and threaten them with *la lanterne* because as they passed they had perceived a statue of the Virgin on the front of the house. Ladders were instantly brought from somewhere, and the statue hacked and mutilated. At last the mob went on its way, but instead of going to rejoin my brother I returned to the Princess and told her what I had just seen. She scolded me for having gone out with the young chambermaid, for she only allowed the older one to take me home. The Princess was under supervision, with a constable in her house. She was bringing up her nephew, the Prince of Salm, and a young English girl who was under her care. The four of us were too young to understand the events that were taking place about us and we laughed and played on the terrace of the Palais de Salm [now the Chancellerie of the Légion d'Honneur, Quai d'Orsay], with all the light-heartedness of childhood. For all that, when, at a certain hour, each day we saw in the distance a crowd assemble on the Place Louis XV [now Place de la Concorde]* around a structure we knew to be a scaffold, we looked away and went back into the house heavy at heart. Our tears flowed at the thought of the unfortunate victims who were dying. But we were far from dreaming that our parents might some day suffer the same fate! Sure of their innocence, we awaited the moment of their release with impatience.

One of the Revolutionary ceremonies which I remember particularly well was the Feast of the Supreme Being celebrated on Sunday, June 8th, 1794. The Convention, on the motion of Robespierre, had just recognized the existence of a Supreme Being and the Immortality of the

* See Note p 265.

Soul A day was set apart for the solemn celebration of this admission. All the people we knew at that time were delighted. We had a writing teacher who was an ardent Jacobin, and a professor of history who was a fervent Royalist, but both, in spite of the difference of their political views, spoke of Robespierre with the same enthusiasm. He was then President of the National Convention, and it was rumoured that on the great day he would proclaim himself king, open the prisons and re-establish order and religion. In short, I remember that everyone looked forward to the fête as to the end of all our troubles.

In spite of the hard times we ourselves had no real privations, because every month Monsieur Henry,* a banker in Dunkirk, sent us a certain sum which he afterwards drew, through London, on my grandmother, who still lived on her plantation in Martinique. This arrangement allowed our governess, during our parents' absence, to provide us with all the comforts to which we had been accustomed.

At last the day of the celebration dawned. To attend the solemnity I was dressed in a white lawn frock with a wide blue sash, and my hair fell in curls on my shoulders. My mother's maid said as she dressed me, "You must make yourself very smart to-day, for it may be that we shall hear that your father and mother are released from prison and you will be allowed to go and kiss them." At this delightful thought I jumped for joy.

On arriving at the Tuileries we saw the members of the Convention file down a long wooden staircase that had been erected near the central hall and led to the garden. All were in full dress, with unpowdered hair. One walked alone in advance, conspicuous from the fact that he alone had his hair powdered. "That is Robespierre," cried the crowd, "he is the only deputy who wears powder. Listen to what he will say." We could not hear a word. The deputies drew near the great central basin in the garden, which had been drained dry, and where various wooden statues representing Atheism and other figures had been placed. All had been surrounded with inflammable material. A lighted fuse was handed Robespierre,

who set it ablaze. In an instant everything had been destroyed and eddies of smoke and flame arose skyward.

A lighted spark fell on me and burned my chest. My lawn frock caught fire, and it was with difficulty that I was saved and taken back to our house. To add to the trials of this day nothing was said about freeing the prisoners, and it left me sad and suffering instead of in the joy I had expected.

One day an unknown woman called at our house and wished to take my brother and me away with her, but without giving any explanation. Mademoiselle de Lannoy refused, whereupon the woman produced a note in my mother's handwriting giving us permission. My governess still hesitated, as she feared a trap, but in the end she acquiesced.

The woman led us to the bottom of a garden in the Rue de Sèvres.* Telling us not to make a sound, she let us into the gardener's cottage. Opposite there was a big building where a window opened and my father and mother appeared. Filled with surprise and delight I uttered a cry and stretched out my arm towards my parents. They made me a sign not to speak, but a sentinel on duty at the foot of the wall had heard us and gave the alarm, whereon the unknown woman hurried us away. We learned later that the window of the prison had been pitilessly walled up. That was the last time I saw my father. A few days later he was no more.

A few moments before his execution my father wrote my mother the following letter, a last token of his affection for us and his devotion to his country :

4th Thermidor of the Second year of
the Republic one and indivisible.

All the evidence given at the so-called examinations which have been to-day inflicted on a number of prisoners shows that I am the victim of foul calumnies spread by certain aristocrats who pretend to be patriots and are now confined here. The knowledge that this infernal conspiracy will not cease until it has brought me before the revolutionary tribunal deprives me of any hope of ever seeing thee again, dear friend, or of ever again embracing my children. I will not dwell on my regrets, my tender love for my children, the brotherly affection

* See Note p 265

I have for thee must convince thee of my feelings in this respect

I grieve also to leave a land I love for which I would willingly have laid down my life a thousand times. Not only can I no longer serve France but the manner of my death makes me appear an unworthy citizen. This torturing thought does not allow me to refrain from begging thee to clear my memory. Strive to rehabilitate it. Prove in the eyes of all men that a life-time spent in serving our country's cause and in assuring the triumph of liberty and justice should outweigh the slanderous accusations of a few individuals most of whom belong to a class we look on with suspicion. This task of thine must be postponed for in the midst of revolutionary tempests a great nation seeking to pulverize its chains must ever be watchful and more afraid of sparing a guilty man than of striking the innocent.

I die not only with the serenity that allows us to think fondly of our dear ones but also with the courage that animates a man who recognizes no master whose conscience is clear, whose spirit is upright, whose most ardent wish is the prosperity of the Republic.

Farewell dear friend. Console thyself in our children. Console them by enlightening their minds and above all by teaching them that by their courage and patriotism they may efface the memory of my execution and recall my services and my claims to our nation's gratitude. Farewell thou knowest those I love be their comforter and by thy care prolong my life in their hearts. Farewell I press thee and my dear children for the last time to my breast.

ALEXANDER B

I will not speak either of my grief or of the tears shed for a beloved father. The memory of it will never leave me, and only time has diminished the emotion his horrible death aroused.

Terror as well as misfortune increased round about us. The Princess Hohenzollern, too, was in despair. Her brother, the Prince de Salm, had perished on the same day as my father. We spent our days with her sharing each other's sorrow. But the Princess longed to leave France. France, where she had been brought up, and which she had loved so much, but where she had suffered too cruelly not to fly from it. And so we were about to lose her.

There were rumours that the children of persons who had perished on the scaffold were to be arrested. My brother considered himself as the natural protector not only

of myself, but also of my mother. Despite his youth he already showed that decision of character and calmness in the face of danger which he has displayed since. "I shall never abandon you," he said to me. "Set your mind at rest, I won't allow you to be taken away. I shall enlist. Then no one will dare touch my sister or my mother. While I'm with the army, and until our mother is released, you must go to La Ferté-Beauharnais."—"All alone? Without you?" I exclaimed. "No, I could never do that."—"Well, then, come along with me. You won't be afraid of the shooting, will you?"—"No, that I can promise you," I answered bravely.

These childish plans, which we considered so easy to carry out and so reassuring, drove away our fears, but could not dissipate our sorrow or our cruel anxiety over our mother's fate. She was to have been executed at the same time as my father, but, when she heard her name called, she fell in a swoon and when she revived was so weak that it was impossible to move her. "We'll come and take her later on," declared the men charged with collecting those to be taken to the scaffold.* It was the 5th Thermidor (July, 1794) : on the 9th the fall of Robespierre put an end to the executions and saved our mother.

* See Note p 265

CHAPTER II

IN THE DAYS OF THE DIRECTORY (1794-99)

Josephine's release—General Hoche and Eugène—First meeting with Napoleon—Bonaparte's courtship—Josephine's marriage—Following the Italian campaign—Family alliances—News from Egypt—Bonaparte returns—The 18th Brumaire (establishment of the Consulate)

THE reign of Robespierre was over, but our mother had not been restored to us when a lady remarkable for her beauty came to see us. It was Madame de Fontenay, afterwards Madame Tallien. She petted us, reassured us by comforting words, and above all by her promise that she would interest herself in our mother, who in truth came home a few days later.* Tallien had brought about her release. He showed great presence of mind, and when, later, he asked Mother as a favour to receive the lady he had just married, and who was attracting too much attention, could she refuse his request?

General Hoche, a friend of my father, whose captivity he had shared, nearly suffered the same fate, escaping only by a curious accident. The great pretext for increasing the number of executions was to imagine conspiracies in the prisons. Through an extreme severity towards Hoche he had been put in a solitary dungeon instead of being with the other prisoners, and this isolation saved him. On his release, after the 9th Thermidor, he resumed his rank, sent for Eugène and took him with him to the Army of the Vendée. Hoche believed that one cannot begin too soon to form a man's character, and despite my brother's age (he was barely thirteen) he spared him no fatigue, employed him constantly as a simple orderly, and exposed him to every danger. Such was the beginning of Eugène's military career, and no doubt it was a most rough school

* See note p. 113

that he learned to understand the soldier, and later to make himself beloved.

But that which for him was instruction filled my mother with dismay. Moreover his regular studies were not finished, so she recalled him from the army, and he and I were placed at two boarding-schools that had just been opened at Saint Germain-en-Laye.* The one I entered was conducted by Madame Campan, formerly first waiting-woman to Marie Antoinette. Ruined by the fall of her mistress, without influence or means, but of great moral worth, Madame Campan sought to retain her independence by the use of her superior talents.

Such was the woman to whose care I was now confided, and who devoted herself to me with all a mother's affection and understanding.

My mother had forced herself to part with us, but we were constantly sent to Paris, and on one of these occasions she told us she was dining with the Director Barras,† and that she could take us with her. "What, Mother," I exclaimed impetuously, "you actually associate with such people? Have you forgotten our family misfortunes?" "My child," she answered with the angelic gentleness which never left her, "you must remember that, since your father's death, I have done nothing but try to save the remains of his fortune that we feared would be lost. Must I not be grateful to those who have helped and protected me?"

I recognized that I was wrong. I begged my mother's pardon and went with her to the Directory established in the Palace of the Luxembourg. Barras had invited a number of guests, of whom Tallien and his wife were the only ones I knew. At dinner I found myself placed between my mother and a general who, in order to talk to her, kept leaning forward so often and with so much vivacity that he wearied me and obliged me to lean back. Thus in spite of myself I looked attentively at his face, which was handsome and very expressive, but remarkably pale. He spoke ardently and seemed to devote all his attention to my mother. It was General Bonaparte, and his interest in her was due to an incident which I must relate.

* See Note p 265

† See Note

As a consequence of the riots on the 13th Vendémiaire (October 4th, 1795) a proclamation was issued forbidding any private citizen to keep arms in his house*. My brother, outraged at the thought of giving up his father's sword, hastened to the audience of General Bonaparte, then in command of the troops stationed in Paris, and told him that he would suffer himself to be killed rather than surrender it. He spoke with so much warmth that the General was touched, granted his request and asked him the name of his mother, saying that he should be glad to know her who had inspired her son with such lofty sentiments. For all that, whatever may have been the cause of the General's very marked attentions, they created in me the idea that my mother might remarry, and this thought saddened me. 'She won't love us so much,' I said to my brother, as I told him what I had observed.

When the General came to my mother's he felt the coolness of our reception. He took some pains to change our attitude but his method did not succeed with me. He tried to tease me, making fun of women in general, and the more vigorously I defended my sex the more violently he attacked it. I was about to make my first Communion, and the General maintained that I was a bigot. Then when I answered 'You did it yourself, so why should not I?' he burst out laughing at having made me angry, and I, not guessing that he was joking, took all that he said in earnest, and formed a bad opinion of him.

Every time I came to Paris from Saint-Germain I found him more assiduous in his attentions to my mother. He seemed to be the life of the little group composed of Madame de Lameth, Madame d'Aiguillon, Madame de la Galissonnière, Madame Tallien and several men. His conversation was always worth listening to—he made even the ghost stories he occasionally told interesting by the way in which he related them. Indeed, he was so openly admired in our circle that I could not hide from my mother the fears that preoccupied me. She protested half heartedly and I shed tears as I begged her not to marry again, or at least not to choose a man whose situation would remove her far from us. But the General had

already more influence than I. Still, I know that my grief made my mother hesitate for some time and she did not yield until he was about to leave without her. He had been appointed commander-in-chief of the Army in Italy. She loved him. How could she part from him? Thus she consented to unite her destiny with his.

Madame Campan was commissioned to break the news that our mother, aware of the distress it would cause us, had not had the courage to tell us. I was, it is true, deeply affected by it. Madame Campan tried to compose me, pointing out the advantages of this marriage to my brother, who wished to serve his country and could not do so better than under the protection of a general, his step-father. Moreover, the General had not been implicated in the horrors of the Revolution. On the contrary, he had suffered by it. His family was an old one, honourably known in Corsica. In every respect it was a suitable match.

I yielded to these considerations. My brother's interests and the certainty that my step-father had had no share in the crimes which had led my father to the scaffold, made me view the marriage more favourably until the moment when my mother's departure for Italy renewed my grief.

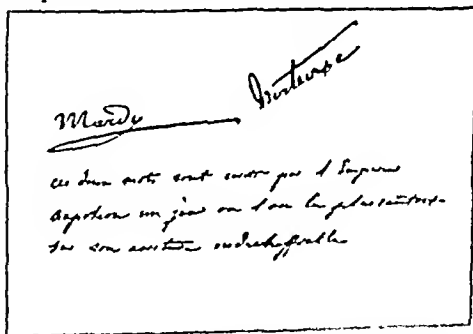
My first cousin, Emilie de Beauharnais,* of whom my mother had taken care after my uncle Alexander's emigration, was sent to school with me, and Jérôme Bonaparte, the General's young brother, with Eugène. And then our mother rejoined her husband.

A very short time passed before the newspapers were filled with accounts of my step-father's victories. Every day Madame Campan wanted to read me the account of them but I withdrew without hearing anything. Then she would call me back and compel me to listen, saying "Do you realize that your mother has united her fate to that of a most remarkable man? What gifts! What valour! Fresh conquests at every moment!"—"Madame," I replied one day, very seriously, "I will give him credit for all his other conquests, but I will never forgive him for having conquered Mother." The expression amused Madame Campan. She repeated it. All Paris heard

* See Note p 266.

it. The reactionaries of the Faubourg Saint-Germain became enthusiastic about me, ascribing to me political opinions I never dreamed of holding.

For some time Madame Campan had been urging me to write to my step-father. I had always refused. How could I express a sentiment I did not feel? It was out of the question. Yet, on the other hand, I could not dwell on all the grief that the marriage caused me. I thought it best not to write at all but, as Madame Campan required it, I submitted. My letter contained only one thought and might be summed up as follows: "I have been told of your marriage with my mother. What surprises me is that you, whom I have so often heard speak badly of women, should have made up your mind to marry one." The General replied by a long letter written in an extremely difficult hand, practically indecipherable to everyone. And it was only during the Consulate that Bourrienne, the First Consul's private secretary, revealed to me all the kind phrases it contained.*



Property of Prince de Saxe

SPECIMEN OF THE WRITING OF NAPOLEON I

The note is by Queen Hortense's "Tutor" (two vols. *Mémoires* and *Hortense*) were written by the Emperor N., at a court of which he was a member at the height of his power.

It was about this time that I made my first Communion, with all the fervour of a young girl whose soul is as enthusiastic as it is innocent. My brother made his on the same day. Every Sunday he spent two hours with me in Madame Campan's apartment. But I did not long enjoy this pleasure as General Bonaparte called him to Italy as his aide-de-camp. How cruelly I suffered at being separated from the brother I loved so dearly!

At the beginning of the holidays all the mothers came to take away their daughters. I alone seemed to have no family, and, heavy-hearted, I often felt very sorry for myself. This was unjust, for no general, no aide-de-camp arrived from Italy bearing despatches or captured flags to Paris who did not also bring me messages and keepsakes from my mother. My step-father himself sent me watches* and Venetian chains by his aides-de-camp, Marmont and Lavallette. Everything was done to show me I was present in their thoughts and that my loneliness was quite natural.

My grandfather lived at Fontainebleau; the Princess Hohenzollern had left France a short time after the death of her brother, the Prince of Salm, so there was no one with whom I could go out. To be sure, Madame Tallien asked me to spend a few days with her, but I stubbornly refused. I felt that my place was not there, and my close friendship with Madame Campan's nieces helped me to bear the separation from my family. Then, too, from time to time I went to Grignon, their father's beautiful estate.

While my schooldays passed thus quietly and calmly, important events were taking place in the outside world, and the peace of Campo-Formio was signed. As important business brought my grandfather and his wife to Paris, he wished to see me. It was long since I had been away from Saint-Germain, and I arrived at nightfall at the square where so many people had perished. The memory of my father and of his tragic death rose before me, so that I sank back in the carriage and wept. I should have been ashamed to let my weakness be seen, for I have always hidden my emotions. I believe that the deeper they are the more care one takes to conceal them.

* See Note p. 266.

I had only been staying for a few days with my grandfather when General Bonaparte arrived from Italy.* Paris rang with his name. Everyone sought to catch a glimpse of him in order to admire him. He lived at my mother's house in the Rue Chantereine, which was promptly rechristened Rue de la Victoire. One morning my grandfather took us—my cousin and myself—to see him. What a change had come over our little home that used to be so quiet! Now it was filled with generals and officers. Sentinels had difficulty in keeping back the crowd and the society folk, who were all equally impatient and eager to catch sight of the conqueror of Italy. At last, in spite of the throng, we managed to reach the General, who was at breakfast surrounded by a numerous staff. He greeted me with the fondness of a father and spoke of my brother, whom he had sent to Zante, to Corfu, to Cephalonia and to Rome with the news of the Peace, and told me that my mother would soon be home again. And a few days later I had the joy of seeing her again and of going to live with her.

She enjoyed telling me about her travels and the perils she had been in during the War—how the troops of General Wurmser had fired on her carriage near Mantua, how General Bonaparte when he heard of this had declared, 'Wurmser will pay dearly for having frightened you,' and how shortly afterwards new victories had confirmed his threats.

I remember also that in telling me about the honours she had received in Italy she spoke of the prediction of an old negress in Martinique, before her marriage. After announcing an extraordinary destiny with two marriages far from the Colony, two children by her first husband she had added that the second marriage would raise her so high that she would be more than a queen, but that she must beware of a priest who would desire her fall.* My mother pointed out that this prophecy, which she had forgotten, was now accomplished, as the successes of the French armies in Italy had made her more than a queen. She did not foresee that this same would raise her higher still. But she confessed that the end of the prediction

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Arme
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frightened her in spite of herself and that she should never see a priest too near her husband without uneasiness.

Monsieur de Talleyrand, then Minister of Foreign Affairs, gave a fête in honour of the General.* My mother took me with her, and it was there that I first saw Madame de Stael.* She had tethered herself to the General, never leaving him, pestering him so much that he did not, and perhaps could not, sufficiently try to hide his annoyance.

My mother was obliged to go a great deal into Society. I preferred not to accompany her and spent my evenings at my grandfather's, where I met my cousin and the Auguié girls. Louis Bonaparte, who had returned to Paris before the General, also enjoyed our company, and came to see us often. He seemed particularly interested in me, and I do not know why I mistrusted him and kept telling my cousin that it was on her account he called so often, but this notion pleased me.

Joseph Bonaparte now arrived in Paris with Julie, his wife, his sister, Caroline Bonaparte, and his wife's sister, Désirée Clary. My brother, whose mission was completed, accompanied them. He had been a mere lad when he left and he came back a man : I looked up to him as my protector.

I counted on finding a real friend in Caroline Bonaparte. She was about my age* and I had no doubt but that our dispositions would be congenial. That this did not come to pass was the fault of the General. Too often he held me up as a model to his sister and he was too anxious to impress her with the few talents I happened to possess. But what especially distressed her was his intention of sending her with me to Madame Campan's. In vain I pointed out that no existence could be more agreeable than the busy days we spent at Saint-Germain, that the pleasures we found there were quite as great as anything Paris had to offer. It was difficult to persuade her. Caroline was already used to society and enjoyed it. Yet in spite of her tears she had to obey the General. I took great pains to make her first days at school as pleasant as possible. I explained away the

* See Note p 266
Vol I

backwardness of her studies by her travels. I made the most of what she knew and retouched her drawings so that she might win a prize. But I never won her heart. Indeed, in her aversion she brought unjust accusations against me, telling the General that I was always showing off at her expense, that it was I who was responsible for the petty humiliations her fellow pupils inflicted on her. Wounded by these undeserved attacks, I sought an explanation, when her frankness disarmed me. She admitted her faults, confided that she was in love with Colonel Murat, and that she had taken every means in her power to be back in Paris. Her confidence touched me and from that moment we were friends.

The expedition to Egypt was in course of preparation, but General Bonaparte wished to arrange the marriage of my cousin, Emilie de Beauharnais, before his departure. She was lovely and gentle as an angel, and a thousand charms added to her connections made her a most desirable match. The general offered her hand to General Marmont, who declined because she was the daughter of an *émigré*. Monsieur Lavallette was eligible on account of his ability and his highly honourable character. He was distinguished in mind and manner but not in looks. General Bonaparte suggested this marriage to him and he accepted. So one day we saw the General appear at Saint-Germain accompanied by my mother and M. Lavallette. We were at table and the General wished to dine with us, and afterwards inspected the whole school. He asked about the various courses of study, gave his opinion as to what subjects were the most important for women, in which he devoted the same serious care and attention to matters which concerned only a few little girls as I have since seen him give to problems of great importance.

Madame Campan was impressed by the apocryphal remarks. Caroline, my cousin and I accompanied the General and my mother for a drive in the forest of Saint-Germain. They had brought a cold dinner with them in their carriage and it was served on the grass. Monsieur Lavallette was very attentive to my cousin and the party took place a week before the departure of the general.

to Egypt. It was celebrated very simply at my grandfather's house. Caroline and I were present.

After the ceremony my cousin looked very sad, and I began to suspect that the match was not to her liking. I spoke to her with tender solicitude and she confessed her love for Louis Bonaparte.* I was as surprised as grieved at this tardy admission and at my helplessness to modify a step which had been definitely taken. I was convinced that, had she spoken earlier, I, acting through Mother, could have broken off the engagement. Her grief touched me all the more because I thought there could be no greater misfortune than to be united to a man one did not love.*

My mother accompanied her husband and my brother as far as Toulon, whence they embarked for Egypt. She then went to Plombières to await the time when she could follow them. A fall came near costing her her life. She was standing with some other persons on a balcony when the planks gave way and she fell twenty feet to the pavement. Thinking she was about to die she sent for me at Saint-Germain. I arrived at once and my tender care restored her to health.

All the members of General Bonaparte's family were now in Paris. Lucien, a member of the Conseil des Cinq-Cents, had quarrelled with all his relatives on account of his unsuitable marriage. (He had married Catherine Royer, daughter of an hotel-keeper at Saint-Maximien, May 4th, 1794. None of his family had attended the wedding.) My mother succeeded in reconciling him with General Bonaparte, and his wife was so nice that everyone ended by receiving her and becoming very fond of her.

General Bernadotte married Désirée Clary, the sister of Madame Joseph Bonaparte. All these persons kept to themselves, living very quietly and only seeing my mother occasionally. About this time she purchased Malmaison,† which she improved and where she stayed until the General's return. I spent one day each week with her, and she complained to me about the attitude of the Bonaparte family. Louis, for instance, who had returned

* See Note p 266

† See Note p 266

from Egypt, was in no hurry to go and see her, and this grieved her

I experienced a serious shock about this time when I received word that my brother had been wounded in the head during the attack of Saint Jean d'Acre. He fell down unconscious and was taken for dead. The same day Colonel Duroc was seriously wounded and General Bonaparte ran the greatest danger. He had been saved by a simple quartermaster of the "Blues" (later General Daumesnil) throwing himself between a shell and the General whom he seized in his arms and covered with his own body. But the General had seen my brother fall, and was too moved to think about himself.

At last General Bonaparte disembarked at Fréjus* at the moment when he was least expected (September 9th, 1799). So great was the enthusiasm that the entire population hastened towards the vessel which brought him to port, climbed aboard and broke all the rules of quarantine.

At that time France was in such a sorry plight that all arms were stretched out to the General and every hope was in him. I left Paris with my mother to meet him. We went through Burgundy, where in every city and every village triumphal arches had been erected. When we stopped to change horses the people would gather round our carriage to ask whether it was really true that the *saviour* (for that was the name that all France had given him) had returned. With Italy lost, the finances exhausted, the Directorate without energy or authority, the return of the General was accounted a favour from heaven. The road from Fréjus to Paris was a series of ovations which showed him, as well as his enemies, what France expected of him. Hardly had he reached Paris when all political parties turned to him. All were eager to change the form of government and wished to secure the advantage of his talents.

When Mother and I were at Chalon-sur-Saône we heard he had travelled through the Bourbonnais, and he was already in Paris when we arrived there.

After the General's return Caroline and I stayed in

Paris till the 16th Brumaire, when he suddenly sent us back to Saint-Germain. My mother begged that we might stay a few more days with her, but he was inflexible. Little did we guess what was to happen on the morrow. But on the night of the 19th Brumaire, General Murat, a true knight-errant, sent us four grenadiers of the Guard, of which he was the commander, to tell us what had taken place at Saint-Cloud and the appointment of General Bonaparte to the Consulate.

Imagine the effect of four grenadiers knocking on the doors of a convent in the middle of the night ! Everyone was alarmed and Madame Campan blamed this military method of sending news. But Caroline read it as a proof of love.

CHAPTER III

AT THE PALACE OF THE TUILERIES AND THE CHATEAU OF MALMAISON (1799-1801)

Hortense and her suitors—The Plague Victims at Jaffa—Hortense
life of the First Consul—Plots and plotters—The explosion in the
Rue Saint Nicolas—At Malmaison—Various visitors—Mademoiselle
Clairon—More sentimental complications—The King and Queen of
Etruria at Malmaison—The Peace of Amiens

AFTER the revolution of the 18th Brumaire, the Consul moved into the Palace of the Luxembourg and devoted himself entirely to affairs of state. My mother's first concern was to obtain his permission for the return of a number of the émigrés. So her drawing room was crowded every morning with members of the oldest families of France. Later they would return accompanied by a father, a husband or a brother eager to express his gratitude towards those who had restored him to his native land. My mother, who had had me recalled from school, was constantly introducing me to relatives of whom I had *never even heard*. The number became so great that it was easy to surmise we owed this increase in our family to our new position.

My mother took me to a ball at the house of the brother of Monsieur de Talleyrand, M. de Périgord, whose name had lately been struck off the list of émigrés. The ball was entirely composed of companions of his misfortune and a part of the nobility who had survived the calamities of the Revolution. There I saw for the first time Monsieur de Mun, Monsieur de Gontaut, Monsieur de Nicolai, Monsieur de Noailles, and Monsieur de Chateaubriand, who one after the other became my suitors. But

I was too young to marry and dreamed only of going back to Saint-Germain. The idle life at the Luxembourg wearied me and became quite unbearable when my mother began to talk seriously to me about Monsieur de Mun. He was enormously wealthy, already the master of his fortune and, it was said, deeply in love with me. I was willing enough to admit all his advantages. What I could not believe was his love. "He has had no opportunity of knowing me and he says he loves me. Either he is of a shallow nature or it is the daughter of the First Consul he wishes to marry from ambition or vanity." This idea caused me to avoid him with the utmost care. He never had a chance of speaking a word to me and, at last, after I had begged for it repeatedly, Mother allowed me to return to Saint-Germain.

My mother sometimes spoke to the First Consul about my marriage. He said little on the subject. At that time he sought to marry his brothers and sisters either into the most distinguished families belonging to the old nobility, in order to attach the latter to the new régime, or else to generals whose abilities and reputation had helped to raise the fame of France to such a height. He replied to my mother that my extreme youth allowed me to take my time and that I should not fail to make a brilliant marriage. His two eldest sisters had disappointed him in this matter. Elisa had preferred a young man of good Corsican family, named Bacciochi, to General Berthier.* He was a good honest fellow, but was not all that the Consul desired. His second sister, Pauline, had chosen General Leclerc,* and Caroline, the third sister, proclaimed openly her affection for General Murat.*

None of these marriages pleased the Consul, and for long he refused his consent to the last. He signed the contract with reluctance and would not attend the ceremony. The annoyance it caused him made him say one day to Madame Campan, "I hope at least this one (pointing to me) will let herself be married properly." At one time he had thought of marrying his sister to General Duroc, whom he esteemed highly, but neither she nor the general wished it.

* See Note p 267.

Paris was coming to life again the end of the Reign of Terror was followed by balls, receptions and general rejoicings. But the social tone of good society was not yet revived the wealth of France had passed into the pockets of tradespeople, and it was they who entertained, and who squandered in a single night's entertainment a fortune they had acquired too easily. Foreigners, reassured by the new order of things and curious to see France after such political upheavals, flocked to Paris, but they were received only in the drawing-rooms of the *nouveaux riches*, where they obtained strange ideas regarding French society, and on their return home filled the news-sheets with erroneous opinions.

Meanwhile, France was prosperous. The Government was being organized. Public works were undertaken on a vast scale. The luxury which is necessary to the life of every great nation reappeared. The First Consul, in order to revive the factories of Lyons and to free us from paying tribute to England, forbade the wearing of muslin materials, and ordered the destruction of all goods of English manufacture. When my mother or I would come into the room wearing an elegant dress, his first question was, 'Is that gown made of muslin?' We often replied that it was lawn from Saint-Quentin, but if a smile betrayed us he would instantly tear the guilty garment in two. This disaster having befallen our clothes several times, we were obliged to revert to satin or velvet. Fashion completed what the Consul had begun, and what he might not have achieved without her, for Cashmir shawls, in spite of being frequently threatened with the fire, survived his taboo.

The Consul was so uncomfortably housed in the Luxembourg that he moved to the Tuileries*. Perhaps, too, he wished to inhabit the palace of the former kings of France. I can recall my mother's sadness during the first few days of our residence at the Tuileries. She saw poor Queen Marie-Antoinette everywhere, and I saw her, too, because it is that Madame Campan had told me about her misfortunes. A reflection of my mother saddened me. I shall never be happy here, she said. 'I felt gloomy from the first minute I entered.' I tried to cheer her,

but did not succeed.* Social activities and especially the good she was able to do others, succeeded better than I.

No matter how plainly I showed my aversion to marriages of expediency, everyone tried to find me a match. The old ladies of the Faubourg Saint-Germain devoted themselves to it with tireless zeal and, as I had not attempted to hide my grief at the time of my mother's marriage, it was taken for granted that my sympathies were with the old régime. It was said that the First Consul called me his little Royalist, that one day I had dared tell him the uniform of commander of the royal forces would suit him better than the one he wore, in short a thousand sayings were put into my mouth and as everyone took it for granted that I shared his views I had the rare good fortune of pleasing everyone. My mother enjoyed the sight of my social success, but I was mortified at being so much under observation, and I begged to be allowed to go back for another year to Saint-Germain. And at last she agreed.

The public was touched by my preference for the life of a boarding-school, where I was merely one of the pupils, to that of a palace, which is always considered a centre of gaiety and pleasure. As a matter of fact my real joys were to be found at Saint-Germain. There I was liked for myself, and the affection which inspired whatever praise I received made it dearer to me than the adulation so obviously prompted by self-interest that was showered on me in Paris. Meanwhile my mother was distressed at my absence. She could not let six days go by without sending for me, and she wept when I left, chiding me gently with being happy away from her and preferring the companionship of my friends. The Consul, who would surprise us in the midst of these reproaches, laughed at her grief and teased her, saying, "Do you think you had children to please yourself? Just think! Once they are grown up they no longer need their parents. When Hortense is married she will belong to her husband, and you will be nothing to her." I protested, but he continued still more mischievously: "Children always love their parents less than they are loved. That is a law of nature. Look

* See Note p 267

at young birds As soon as they can fly they leave the nest and never return "

Then when tears fell from my mother's eyes he would take her on his knees, kiss her, and in a tone that was half jesting, half-serious, say, "Poor little woman! How unhappy she is! She has a husband who cares only for her and that isn't enough It is I who ought to make scenes, for you are far fonder of your children than you are of me." "No," my mother replied, with a smile, "you cannot doubt my affection, but I cannot be wholly happy if my children are not with me."—"What more do you need to make you happy?" asked the Consul "You have a husband who is no worse than the average, two children who are in every way a credit to you There! you were born with a silver spoon in your mouth"—"You're right," she replied, and smiles followed the tears.

When such scenes had recurred repeatedly I felt that I must wait for my mother herself to propose that I should return to Saint-Germain Several days passed, she said nothing, and I remained definitely with her.

I occupied a very small apartment* next to my mother's dressing-room* In order not to waste my time I had taken several teachers The First Consul said to me severely "Are you studying English?"—"Yes," I answered, somewhat dismayed by the tone in which he spoke—"Dismiss your teacher"—"But he seems very good"—"Dismiss him He is a spy"—"That can't be true"—"Do as I say You are a child and don't understand these things" I was silent, convinced this was a piece of slander, and that so despicable a trade could not be carried on by such an honest looking man Moreover, what could he hope to find out from me? I was vexed, for I believed I was being forced into committing an injustice, and for fear of offending the one I had been obliged to dismiss I declined to take another teacher, and gave up the study of English.

My brother left for the front with his regiment* The Consul followed him shortly afterwards, excusing the wonderful crossing of the Alps and winning the battle of Marengo, which doubled the enthusiasm he already

inspired in France. I leave to the imagination our anxiety and our joy when the Consul wrote saying my brother had distinguished himself. While they were away we lived at La Malmaison, and all the young men of the Faubourg Saint-Germain called there assiduously. My marriage began to be spoken of again.

The return of the First Consul interrupted these matrimonial projects. He came back much depressed by the death of General Desaix. One evening, as he was speaking to my mother about the General, tears stood in his eyes. "What a fine man," he said. "What a loss to our country. I intended him for Hortense. With him she would have been happy. I regret him deeply." My mother noted with pleasure these moments when this brilliant man, too frequently accused of lacking emotion, gave way to his feelings.

"People do not know Napoleon," she would say. "He is quick-tempered, but kind. If he did not seek to suppress these outbursts of feelings, which he considers signs of weakness, people would understand him better."

One day, as we were standing at a window of the Tuileries the Consul noticed a decently dressed man who was timidly asking alms of the passers-by. He sent Eugène out to him with some money and we watched to see the effect this kindness would have on the old man. His joy was so evident that the Consul exclaimed, "How little it takes to please him ! Let us make him entirely happy." He sent for him there and then, and questioned him regarding his needs and how he had fallen into poverty, paid him a considerable sum of money and promised him his protection.

One day I had a bad cold, and had made myself a turban out of muslin. The Consul said to me : "Did we bring the fashion of wearing turbans back from Egypt with us ? If so I can give you some strips of cashmir so that you can make yourself a real one." He called his servant and asked, "Have I still the tricolour-sash that was made for me in Egypt ?"—"Yes, General," answered Ambart.—"Then go and get it. I wore it at the battle of the Pyramids," he went on, turning to my mother, "so it has been some-

what blackened by the smoke, and it had a close view of the plague. "There, Hortense," he added, when it had been brought to him, "don't be frightened of it, and make yourself smart."

As I had often heard my step-father and his companions speak of his visit to the plague-victims at Jaffa, it occurred to me that the incident might make an effective painting. Gros,* who had just come back from Italy, happened to be at the Tuileries one morning. I mentioned my idea to him. He approved of it and made a picture that has remained one of his finest works. It was shown at the Salon.

One morning my brother came in very angry with the painter for having drawn the General's aides-de-camp holding their handkerchiefs in front of their mouths. "I know better than anyone else what took place at Jaffa," he said, "because I was there with the other aides-de-camp. We certainly did not feel comfortable. But should we have dared show fear when the General, in order to reassure the troops, displayed such courage and exposed himself as he did?"

Work absorbed the First Consul completely. He took no rest by day nor night, and all else was subordinated to his occupations. Bed-time and meal times were equally irregular, and he seemed able to do without sleep or food. He always lunched alone. We saw him only at dinner. If he happened to come downstairs earlier and my mother was still dressing, he amused himself with teasing her or criticizing the way she did her hair. He would take out the flowers she was wearing, put them back differently, insist that this new way was much more becoming than the way the hairdresser had arranged them, and call on me to testify what good taste he had. All this with a most laughable gravity.

When he had something on his mind he would come in looking serious, sit down in a big arm-chair in front of the fireplace or walk about the room without paying attention to anyone. "Not ready yet?" would be his only remark. Dinner took place in silence. It lasted ten minutes. Sometimes he even left the table before dessert had been served. My mother would point this out to him. He

would smile, sit down a moment, and then leave us immediately without having said a word. When he was in this state of mind everyone was afraid of him. No one ventured to interrupt for fear of disturbing his thoughts or of receiving a curt answer. We would say to each other, "He is in a bad temper to-day. Has anything new happened?" And after questioning one another we were not a whit the wiser.

We went to the theatre fairly often. The plays the Consul liked best were tragedies by Corneille and Racine. He only went to the Opera because we enjoyed it. The day of the first performance of the ballet *Dansemonie*,* my brother, who had told us he would not dine at the Tuileries, appeared about six o'clock accompanied by all the other aides-de-camp. I was surprised and said so, and then he told me that there was a plot to assassinate the First Consul that evening at the play, and that the latter intended to go in order to seize the conspirators red-handed. All precautions had been taken, but as a further safeguard his aides-de-camp were to accompany him. Eugène begged me not to say a word to anyone, especially not to our mother, whose fears would interfere with the Consul's plans. Imagine my alarm up to the moment when, entering the opera, I saw everything was as quiet as usual. The conspirators had hired the box just over ours. They intended to assassinate the Consul either when he came in or as he was going out, but they were arrested during the performance. They were tried and convicted. They were Jacobins, called Ceracchi, Arena, etc., and one of their accomplices had betrayed them shortly before the attempt was to be made.

Another plot was to kill the Consul with air guns. I had heard of it, and during the entire performance, as I sat between my mother and the Consul, I kept casting nervous glances all around the audience. Every time a man took out his handkerchief I wondered if it were the fatal weapon about to be aimed at our box. But in a long run one becomes used to anything, even danger, and the failure of several attempts of this kind gave a feeling of security.

* See Note p 268

But this did not last. For some time people had been talking about an oratorio by Haydn, the music of which was supposed to be remarkably fine. The day of the performance arrived,* and we were preparing to go to the opera house. The Consul, who had sat down by the fire after dinner, did not seem inclined to go out. We were all dressed and waited impatiently for him to make up his mind. My mother urged him to come. "It will amuse you, you are working too hard." The Consul shut his eyes and made no reply. Finally he said we could go but he should stay at home. My mother wanted to keep him company, and an argument ensued, which ended by orders being given to have the horses put in. A moment before stepping into his carriage the Consul found fault with my mother's dress,* and we owed our life to this remark. She wished to repeat what he had said to Caroline and the aide-de-camp Rapp, and thus lost a few minutes. Thus our carriage instead of being immediately behind that of the Consul was some little distance away. As we entered the Rue Saint-Nicolas we felt a violent shock. The carriage seemed to be blown away, and the windows were broken and fell on us.

"It's an attempt to kill Bonaparte," exclaimed my mother, and fainted. Our horses, terrified at the noise, suffocated by the powder, reared, and taking the bit in their teeth, dashed back with us to the Tuileries.

Caroline, although she was about to have a child,* kept her head and attempted to reassure my mother. She had seen a mass of flame. A house had fallen in. It could not be a plot against her brother. But my mother kept repeating over and over again, "It's an attempt to kill Bonaparte." I, too, tried to calm her, explaining that it was our carriage that had been attacked, that the violence of the shock we had experienced proved this, and that the mistake had saved the Consul. A piece of glass had slightly wounded my hand.

Rapp had dashed into the Rue Saint-Nicolas. There he saw men, women and children dead or wounded,* with limbs torn off, houses in ruins that threatened to bury him.

One of the soldiers of the escort who had been seen to

* See Vol. p. 271

meet us quieted our fears with the news that the explosion had only occurred as the Consul was leaving the Rue Saint-Nicolas, and that he had arrived safely at the Opera. We proceeded thither by another route. My mother was unable to master her emotion when she saw her husband, but he with a calm intended to quiet her fears asked: "What is the matter, what has happened? A mere nothing." His whole manner was as cool as though he had not guessed that there had been another attempt made on his life. Rapp arrived and described the disaster of the Rue Saint-Nicolas, through which he had just passed. The Prefect of Police and General Junot, Military Governor of Paris, came to give further details of this terrible affair. The Consul listened in silence, but when he heard how many persons had been found dead near the cart loaded with powder he exclaimed in tones of anguish, "How ghastly to make so many people perish because one wants to get rid of one single man."

The news of the event began to spread through the house. Fear and curiosity had already caused a number of the spectators to leave, and my mother's agitated face showed clearly enough that something extraordinary had happened. At last the piece came to an end, and we returned to the Tuileries, where we found all the government authorities and leading citizens of Paris. I heard their discussion; and everyone named the political party he believed capable of committing such a crime. The Consul and all the ministers accused the Jacobins. Fouché alone maintained that the blow came from the royalists, but he persuaded no one. Indeed, how could one suspect that men who had so loudly protested against the excesses of others could be guilty of such an act? Would they emulate those upon whom they had showered scorn and reproaches?

A little later the Consul's coachman came in while we were at table, and gave us the following details. One of his friends had rented a stable to some unknown men. They kept a cart there and often came to look at it. On the day of the explosion they had ~~when~~ ^{the cart} ~~was drinking~~ and never reappeared. He had learn

at a public-house, and it was his information, added to that collected by the Minister of Police, which gave the scent. There was no longer any doubt that it was the royalists who had hatched and executed this plot.

The Consul's habits were much the same at Malmaison as in Paris. He invariably worked all the morning, either alone or with his ministers, who came out from Paris. Learned men were invited to dinner, they stayed afterwards, spending the rest of the evening, and the Consul enjoyed their conversation. Those I saw the most frequently were Monge, Berthollet, Fourcroy, Volney, Laplace, Lagrange and Prony. Those who were married came with their wives. Lemercier also came to Malmaison several times, and read us his tragedies. Of them all it was Monge whom the Emperor seemed to like best as a man, and he never severed relations with him entirely. He even suggested later that he should be tutor to my children. Volney came only during the Consulate, but then he came often, for he was highly esteemed by all who had taken part in the expedition to Egypt. In those days I did not realize how eminent these distinguished men were, and my only recollections of them are of very trivial conversations and remarks suited to my youth. For instance, the thing I remember about Volney was that whenever he sat beside me he would insist on my not eating too much bread. He said it was bad food and made the chyle too thick. I believe it was the word *chyle*, which I had never heard pronounced before, that made me remember the distinguished savant. I learned later that his fidelity to Republican ideas caused him to see less of us during the Empire.

The Emperor never resented this. He respected all opinions if they were honest and sincere, and I recall having seen him very much distressed in 1812 or 1813 on hearing of an accident that had befallen Volney. The latter had been taking a quiet walk when a bull suddenly charged him and tossed him far across the field. I also saw the Emperor affected by the news that Moniteur de Lafayette (who, like Volney, avoided us) had broken his leg on the ice as he was returning home after a fall.

to see him he would find time, in spite of his many occupations, to visit him. One day he drove out with my mother and myself, and we went to the Jardin des Plantes to call on Daubenton, the naturalist, who lived in a little pavilion giving on to the garden. He seemed extremely old as he sat in a large arm-chair, but in spite of his great age he had all his wits about him when he spoke. The general asked him many questions about Buffon.

I have always been sorry I did not keep a letter General Bonaparte received from Beaumarchais on his return from Italy*. I might have done so easily enough. The letter was so flattering and so well written that he read it aloud to my mother and me. The praises that were given to him then with every kind of exaggeration were so numerous that one could notice only such as were presented with wit and moderation, and those of Beaumarchais struck me because they were in the best of taste, but that letter, like so many others, was burned.

Under the Republic, when social life had been completely destroyed, the republicans tried to make the cultured class adopt the manners and habits of the populace. Under the Consulate, on the other hand, the Consul, when he brought people together again, strove to raise everyone of talent and value to the level of good society (which used to be so exclusive), no matter what had been their origin. Aristocratic traditions are so deeply rooted among all classes in France that this was no easy matter. Nevertheless he tried.

He went so far as to invite some famous actors to dine at Malmaison. I met there one after another, Talma, Mademoiselle Raucourt, Mademoiselle Contat, Mademoiselle Fleury, all distinguished artists and possessing excellent manners. But people took offence, and prejudice is so strong that the *haut-cœur* riches objected quite as much as the old nobility.

And one day at the Tuileries the Consul invited to his table two old soldiers, one of whom was over a hundred years of age. I remember that it was a dinner attended by the members of the first mission from Russia. One of the young princes attached to the legation who sat beside me



Drawing by Bayet

Belonging to Prince Napoleon

BONAPARTE

to frighten them by speaking of their foolhardiness in venturing into France where everyone was killed and that, although he had not believed these tales, he was surprised to have heard nothing talked about here but balls and receptions.

One day an old woman called at Malmaison who looked a hundred years old. She was dressed in the fashion of Louis XVI, with a little black tulle cap shaped like a raven's bill, semi-hoopskirts, and a brocaded gown drawn through the pocket. Only on the stage were such costumes kept for those who played the parts of old women, and no one would have ever suspected that the person dressed in this fashion was the beautiful and famous actress, Mademoiselle Clairon, who had enchanted all France, and who had been the first to discard the habit of wearing fashionable dresses in favour of those belonging to the epoch of the heroines she portrayed. "I longed to see a hero before I died," she said to my mother, "and I thought, Madame, you would not refuse me this happiness." And, in truth, my mother was very kind to her and invited her to spend part of the day at Malmaison to wait till the Consul should appear. When he did arrive she looked at him attentively; and, in the drawing-room, if, by accident, anyone interfered with her view of the First Consul she would beg him not to rob her of the few moments she had to look at her hero. He was most gracious to her and among other remarks said, "I have heard so much of your admirable talent that I greatly regret never having witnessed one of your performances, Mademoiselle Clairon." "And I," she replied promptly, "am delighted you never did." Everyone was astonished, and she went on, "Had you done so you would now be very old, First Consul, and France needs you to remain young a long time." Mademoiselle Clairon died some time after this visit, having received from the Consul the assistance she needed badly.

The officers whose duties brought them most often to Malmaison were the Generals Bessières, Lannes, Clarke, Junot, Murat and the aides-de-camp Le Marois, Caulaincourt, Rapp, Caffarelli, Duroc, Savary, Lauriston, Lacuée, Lebrun, Lefebvre and Bourrienne, the Consul's

secretary My brother, a major in the *Chasseurs de la Garde*,* was a frequent visitor Louis Bonaparte,* who commanded a regiment of dragoons, did not come so often Lavallette was special envoy at Dresden It was with great reluctance that his wife had decided to live with him at one time she had hoped to have the marriage annulled on the return of the expedition from Egypt, when she had explained her feelings to General Bonaparte, and had told him that she cared for his brother Louis The latter replied that he thought my cousin a kind, good woman, but were she free he would not marry her, for she was too much changed by the smallpox My mother repeated this to my cousin, who was indignant On the other hand the attentions of her husband, his care of her, and all his kindness gradually won her heart and aroused a warm affection towards the man she had avoided Since then a lasting union has been the result of this change of heart

Louis's conduct towards my cousin had prejudiced me against him, and the sort of relationship that united us made me look on him as a brother, so that when occasion offered I sometimes jested at his expense It had never entered my mind that he could become my husband, nor that he could have the least affection for me, but when he came to say good bye before leaving for Prussia he asked leave to kiss me, and did so with so much emotion, and went out of the room so hurriedly that I remained motionless where he had left me A kind of dismay seized me when I thought that he might have a too tender feeling for me

Of all the young men with whom I came in contact only one, Colonel Duroc, dared propose for my hand Remembering that the Consul had proposed a marriage with his own sister, he thought there would be no opposition to a union with me, and although Duroc was not the man my imagination conjured up as the being worthy to receive all my love, he was not displeasing to me I saw his numerous good qualities, and the great respect he had for me made me believe in the sincerity of his feelings Still how often when I was listening to him I said to myself, 'Yet this is not the man' Well I perhaps I should have married

him had it not been for my mother's formal opposition to the match. The Consul saw no objection, but she took the opposite view. "I could never get used to hearing you called Madame Duroc," she said to me. "Are you in love with him? I should be in despair if you were." I reassured my mother. I told her my heart was untouched, my life happy, and I did not wish for any change.

In the midst of my brilliant surroundings I did not forget my former companions, and often went to Saint-Germain to see them, as well as my grandfather who had retired to that town and died there at the age of eighty-seven, sustained by our respectful love and regretted as he deserved to be.

About this time Louis I of Etruria and his Queen passed through Paris before going to Tuscany, where they had just been appointed sovereigns by the Consul. It was the first throne that the Consul had given, and Louis was the first Bourbon to reappear in France since the Revolution. He was tall with a good figure, but drooping cheeks and thick lips made his face expressionless. He was subject to epileptic fits. He and his wife often came to Malmaison, but the Consul paid them attention only on the first day; he had too much to do elsewhere, and as my mother was ill it was I who was obliged to entertain them. They were not difficult to amuse. Walks, music, prisoner's base, parlour games all delighted them, and when the Consul wished to speak of state affairs with the King and give him instructions, he found him so inattentive that he accused me jokingly of having made him forget his royalty. Before they left Berthier and Talleyrand had to give two splendid receptions for the royal guests, who were enchanted, particularly by the contrast between the brilliance of French entertainments and the gravity of the Italian Court.

One day my mother introduced me to a lady who had just arrived from England, and who came only once to Malmaison. It was the Duchesse de Guiche. She did not see the Consul and if as I have heard since, she had hoped to find in Napoleon another Monk, she cannot have been pleased with the success of her journey. I was too young to know the exact details of it, so I will not attempt

to give them. I knew only that the royalists hoped that France, which was beginning to feel the need of permanent power, would forget former animosities and recall the Bourbons. The feeling of the instability of a merely temporary power seemed to be shared by men of all opinions. The conspiracies against the Consul whose life was bound up with the destinies of France, had aroused such hatred against their authors that even partisans of a Republic believed it necessary to strengthen the powers of the Consul of the Republic in order to remove from the enemies of the Revolution every pretext to imperil the fruit of so many efforts. The advocates of a monarchy asked for that to be re-established with all the guarantees and strength that are insured by stability, and the Consul seemed to them alone in possession of talents that could assure its duration without fear of calamitous reactions. The higher aristocracy, many of whose members lived abroad, regretted its lost privileges and realized that only by a return of the Bourbons would it be possible to regain them, but had no hope that this return would take place.

One day the Consul received a very cleverly drafted genealogical chart showing his descent from Louis XIII in the direct line. The person who in order to please all factions had imagined this trickery, sought to prove that the Man in the Iron Mask was one of the sons of Louis XIII and Anne of Austria, and that Louis XIV was only a second son whose father, moreover, was Cardinal Richelieu. The Man in the Iron Mask, according to the genealogist, having been sent to the Island of Saint Margaret, married a noble woman of the district. His son took the name Bonaparte, and established himself in Corsica. Consequently the Consul was the legitimate heir to the French throne. The Consul was much amused at this fairy tale and laughed about it with us. But he was always far prouder of his personal ability than of any illustrious ancestor he might have had or who might be a tribute paid to him. The love of his fellow-countrymen was his right to office.

In our drawing-room there was never a word spoken about the smallest political affair. The only one that

interested us was a peace treaty, and we were the last to be informed of it. When the peace with Vendée was concluded the chiefs of the insurgents who came to Malmaison were well received by the Consul. He appeared to hold them in high esteem. I frequently have heard him praise them for defending their cause so perseveringly, and blame the Bourbons for not having supported such a valiant resistance. Once, during the Empire, I heard him say, "I do not know what I should have been able to do if the Bourbons had put themselves at the head of the Vendean rebellion."

The Consul's aide-de-camp, Colonel Lauriston,* was sent to England (after the signing of the Peace of Amiens, 1802). He was received in triumph, and his carriage was dragged through the streets of London by the populace. All France, too, felt the enthusiasm inspired by the reconciliation of the two great nations, which for so long had been enemies. The Consul himself, who never expressed his pleasure, let his joy be seen on this occasion. He hastened to tell us the good news and ordered the cannon to be fired at once. This was the only time I ever knew him to inform anyone, especially any woman, of a political event.

I do not know whether he had opened the despatches addressed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, or if he received the news directly, but Monsieur de Talleyrand appeared at dinner in a very bad humour, quite put out, like a man whose vanity has been mulcted of a success. And in truth it was rather amusing that the Minister of Foreign Affairs should hear that peace had been signed from the guns of the Invalides. To console him for this discomfiture, the Consul, all smiles, paid him special attention.

* See Note p 268

CHAPTER IV

MADAME LOUIS BONAPARTE (1802-1804)

Bourrienne delivers a message—The marriage of Hortense and Louis Bonaparte, January 3rd, 1802—Domestic difficulties—A painful dilemma—Quarrels and reconciliations—Birth of the Prince Royal—Sidelights on General Moreau's conspiracy—Death of the Duc d'Enghien.

My mother's health obliged her to take the waters at Plombières. I went there with her, and so did my cousin, who had returned from Dresden with her husband. During our stay a number of receptions and balls were given for us, and I left Plombières with keen regret and sad presentiments. It seemed to me that I was enjoying my last moments of freedom and happiness. I foresaw that on my return a marriage would be arranged for me. I was seventeen, and my mother, who at that age already had her two children, thought that I was too old to wait much longer.

We had scarcely returned home when she spoke to the Consul, who agreed with her and added that only one match was suitable—it was his brother Louis. 'We may never have children,' he went on, 'I brought up Louis and look on him as a son. Your daughter is what you cherish most on earth. Their children shall be ours. We will adopt them and this adoption will console us for not having any of our own. But it is necessary that our plan meet with the young people's approval. My mother was delighted with the Consul's proposal. It fulfilled all her desires and charmed her the more so as it implied that I should remain near her.

Bourrienne requested an audience with me one day and addressed me as follows*: I have been commissioned

* See Vol. p. 252.

to suggest something to you which your mother and the Consul desire ardently. They wish to unite you to Colonel Louis Bonaparte. He is kind and affectionate. His tastes are simple. He will appreciate you to the fullest degree, and is the only suitable husband for you. Look about you. Who is there you would care to marry? The time has come when you must consider the matter seriously. No one until now has appealed to you, and even if your heart made a choice that did not meet with your parents' approval, would you be prepared to disobey them? You love France. Do you want to leave it? Your mother could not bear the thought of your union with some foreign prince who would separate you from her for ever. Her misfortune, as you know, is that she can no longer hope for children. You can remedy this and perhaps ward off a still greater misfortune. I assure you intrigues are constantly being formed to persuade the Consul to obtain a divorce. Only your marriage can tighten and strengthen those bonds on which depend your mother's happiness. Will you hesitate?"

I had let Bourrienne speak without interruption, meanwhile I learned for the first time that it was in my power to contribute to my mother's peace of mind. How could I refuse? But I needed to become accustomed to the idea of uniting my life with that of a man for whom I did not care particularly. Such a proposal required mature consideration. I asked for a week and promised to give my answer at the end of that time.

My brother had just gone to Lyons with his regiment. He had preceded the Consul. I could not have the advantage of his advice and, moreover, I felt that it was for me to make my own decision. It was a question of sacrificing my romantic fancies to my mother's happiness. I could not hesitate between the two.

My reason assured me Louis Bonaparte did not displease me, that his conduct towards my cousin had been merely thoughtlessness, that his kindness would make me love him, that the ideal being I had created in my imagination did not exist, that experience had proved him a figment of my fancy, that I must forget my dreams and that my

future would not be an unhappy one since it was founded on the affection and esteem of my husband and on the accomplishment of my duty. Thus I arrived at my irrevocable decision, not, however, without being occasionally haunted by visions of felicity which, as the tears that rose to my eyes showed, were dearer to me than I was prepared to admit. The week having elapsed, I gave Bourrienne my reply, but, strange to say, from the day I did so I became calm. All my agitation seemed to have passed from me to my mother. Too well aware of my ideas on marriage not to suspect the reasons underlying my acceptance, she wept continuously. Her glances seemed to say, "You are sacrificing yourself for me." I realized that in order to console her I must seem satisfied.

We returned to Paris. The Consul sent for his brother, who at the time was with his regiment. They were talking together in my mother's room when I happened to come in. I heard the Consul pronounce the following words, "She is a sweet and virtuous young girl." I withdrew at once. My heart was beating violently. I guessed the Consul was speaking of my marriage and that in connection with it he was praising me. In truth, a few days later our union was announced. The news was received with joy throughout the palace, but especially among the *aides-de-camp*. They congratulated themselves that I was not leaving them, that they could always consult me about what was uppermost in their hearts. They had feared I would be married off to some foreign prince. One report gave me to the Duke of Cumberland, another named the Archduke Charles. All these rumours were without foundation. In fact there could have been no question, just then, of such a match.

Lucien Bonaparte, who for some time had been a widower, had asked for my hand. The Consul had refused with indignation. Lucien was affronted, and, as I learned later, tried to dissuade Louis from marrying me.

The Consul had not yet said a word to me about my marriage. One day he spoke of it, and this is all he said: "Well! so Louis is courting you, is he? The Consul will suit you and your mother, too. There, I give my ear

sent." My mother could not make up her mind to fix the day of our marriage. She burst into tears each time the subject was mentioned. The Consul consoled her, made fun of her, and, as he was in a hurry to leave for Lyons, where the *Consulta* of Milan were waiting to arrange the organization of the Italian Republic with him, he decided I was to marry two days later. I was not well at the time. I asked my mother to obtain a further two days' delay. The Consul consented, although put out at being obliged to postpone a journey for which all the preparations had been made.

My mother had proposed that we should live near her in the Tuileries.* Louis declined, and the Consul gave us the little house in the Rue de la Victoire, considering it natural that young married people should wish to have a house of their own and be by themselves. My mother's grief contrasted with my calm.* The more I saw her weep, the more strength I had to seem contented. I was glad of my brother's absence. From him I could conceal nothing. He would have guessed that I was not entirely happy. I should have pitied myself when I met his glance, and I needed all my courage to pronounce that *yes* which, while it seemed to me to be the beginning of a calm and placid existence, marked the end of those dreams of pure and bright felicity which I had cherished ever since I could remember.

On January 3rd, 1802, my old nurse entered my room.† She had heard that my marriage was to take place that evening, and wishing to be the first to congratulate me had hurried to Paris from her village.

The day passed drearily enough in the choosing and distributing of various pieces of jewellery to be given to the palace servants. They received them with tears in their eyes and expressed their regret that they would no longer wait on me. Such things are always touching, but my courage had returned, and I was prepared to face anything without betraying emotion.

My marriage took place in the privacy of the family. The Consuls Cambacérès and Lebrun, General Bessières and Monsieur Lavallette acted as witnesses.† My mother

* See Note p 269.

† See Note p 270

had had a very handsome dress made for me trimmed with flowers. The Consul had given me a set of diamonds, but when the time came for me to dress it seemed silly to me to dress so much, and I insisted on wearing only my pearls, a white crêpe dress, and on carrying a simple bouquet of orange blossoms. Should I have consented to such simplicity had I been more enthusiastic? That I cannot say.

The Consul called for us to take us to the apartments of state, where the municipal authorities were waiting for us. We went up his private staircase with my mother. Louis wished to follow us, but the Consul bade him take the principal staircase. This incident seemed to vex him. We were married. Only my mother wept. I was so afraid of saying *yes* in a weak, trembling voice that I pronounced it louder than, perhaps, I should have done. We went to the Rue de la Victoire, where Cardinal Capara, who had recently arrived in France to attend to affairs connected with the Church, was waiting for us in a temporary chapel*. He gave us the nuptial blessing. Murat and Caroline received it at the same time, for when they were married the services of the Catholic faith had not yet been re-established. This double ceremony produced a disagreeable impression on me. The other couple were so happy. They were so much in love with one another. Was it superstition—or second sight? I feared lest all the happiness lay on one side, all the unhappiness on the other. I reassured myself, however; everybody told me how kind Louis was, how happy I should be, and I wanted to persuade myself that this was true. We went into a drawing room where the magnificent wedding-presents were displayed. These baubles did not interest me, but my indifference appeared to vex my husband. As soon as I noticed this I did my best to make amends.

The next day we lunched at the Tuilleries. The Consul joked with me. My mother still wept. To change her mood he spoke to her of his visit to Lyons and enquired what people were saying about it. 'It is a *tragedy*,' she replied, 'that you are going there to have yourself elected

King of Italy." The Consul answered laughingly that he created kings but would not wear a crown.*

The Consul left Paris with my mother three days after my wedding. Her departure saddened me. I should be left alone with a husband whose character I did not yet know. To be sure, I was already aware that a very small thing sufficed to upset him, but I had firmly resolved to do my utmost to satisfy him in every respect, to do everything that lay in my power to make him happy.

The Consul had given us permission to live at Malmaison while he was away. We decided to go there in spite of the cold weather. My friend and schoolfellow, Adèle Auguié, accompanied me. We spent our days walking in the snow-covered woods and our evenings by the fireside. One of Louis's friends who was an officer in the regiment he commanded joined us for a few days. He was rather gawky. While we read aloud and he sat by a table on which were a number of puzzles, he tried them all one after another without being able to solve any of them. We wanted to laugh. Louis, who had just begun a novel, stopped and accused us of making fun of him. This made us serious at once. Unfortunately we happened to glance again at the young officer, who could not undo a hoop from the ring-puzzle. We again burst out laughing and neither my husband's air of displeasure nor our own efforts could restrain our mirth. Everything increased our hilarity, which, however, ended on my part in bitter tears. When we were alone my husband said to me very seriously, "Who do you take me for? Do you believe I am prepared to be your plaything? I warn you, only a woman of light morals dares laugh at her husband and make sport of him. I would rather leave you than allow myself to be thus humiliated." Words cannot describe my despair. In an instant I saw all my dreams, not only of happiness but even of tranquillity, collapse about me. I could not have imagined such a disposition as that with which I found myself confronted. The thought of the future terrified me.

A hundred gloomy thoughts threw me into a condition I had never before experienced. My nerves gave way, and tears brought relief. My husband, touched and affected,

* See Note p 270

sought to console me, but the harm had been done. Louis now roused only one feeling in me, that of fear. I dared no longer laugh or speak before him. It seemed to me he was always on the point of losing his temper. Although still filled with the wish to make him happy I felt that I did not know how to do so.

Thus passed my honeymoon, that first month of marriage said to be the happiest in life. Ah, well, sad though it was, it was yet one of the least unhappy of my existence. Hope still remained with me. I still cherished the idea of calming Louis's distrustful nature by my attentive care.

My mother returned with the Consul. She questioned me closely regarding my home-life. I answered that I was happy, that I was delighted with my husband. She was satisfied—that was all I wanted. Moreover, I should have felt I was committing a wrong to complain of the man to whom Fate had irrevocably bound me. Only to Adèle did I confide all my fears for the future. I hoped these effusions might bring relief, that so sincere a friendship might strengthen my courage.

My mother had often looked at me attentively since she had come back to Paris. Her eyes seemed to be seeking in my face the first signs of a pregnancy which she liked to foresee, and which soon afterwards was announced. My husband, my mother and the Consul were overjoyed. The latter repeatedly told me he hoped I would not have a daughter, whom he should receive coldly. As for me, it was a child that I asked Heaven to send me, that was all. At the time I was copying the head of a young child in one of Greuze's paintings. I imagined that mine would have some features of the charming model. Later—was it fact or fancy?—I did find a resemblance to it.

At this time (1801) the Concordat was signed,* and the Catholic religion re-established in France. On Easter day the Consul attended the services at Notre Dame in great pomp. We were present in one of the tribunes. From that time on, Mass was said every Sunday and Festival day at the Tuileries.

Adèle was the daughter of Monsieur Adolphe, *Comte de Retz*, *Grand Maître des Eaux et Forêts*. She had two elder sisters.

who were very dear to me. One of them, Antoinette, god-child of the King and Queen of France, was married to Monsieur Gamot, and Eglé, Adèle's second sister, we married to General Ney, and I continued to see her frequently.

Several women noted for their charm had recently become members of the household. All the officers attached to the Consul's person were married, and the four ladies-in-waiting, whom the Consul had just appointed, were noted for their excellent reputation. They were Madame de Luçay, Madame de Talhouet, Madame de Lauriston and Madame de Rémusat. The latter owed her position to my mother's recommendation. Daughter of Monsieur de Vergennes and brilliantly gifted, her appointment as lady-in-waiting, and that of her husband as *préfet du palais*, had released them from the financial straits the family had been in since the Revolution.

I never used rouge because I had a very good colour, but one day when we had been acting I had so much that I really did not know how to get it off. My maid suggested my mother's face cream, and I ran to her dressing-room where she was alone, undressing. Having washed my face, I returned at once to my room. Louis had just come in. My maid told him where I was and I repeated her statement, but he did not say a word. The next day he sat writing in my room, then went out leaving the table covered with the papers he had just written. Undoubtedly they were intended for me, but the thought of reading them never crossed my mind. So I stayed there looking and feeling just as usual, and far from supposing that he could have anything against me. A few hours later Louis came back and said in a natural tone of voice: "I've just ordered my carriage. I have to go and see how the work at my little country-place at Baillon is getting on."—"Am I to accompany you?" I enquired.—"No. I want to have everything arranged there. I shall be with the workmen all the time. You had better stay here. You'll see me again before long. Then, too, your mother would make a fuss if you left." I did not answer, and kissed him when he set out.

Two or three days went by. I thought that a surprise visit

would please him. I spoke of it to Mother, who approved of the idea, but made me promise to return two days later. I invited Adèle and her sister to sup with me as I returned through Paris. My husband received me with surprise and treated me coldly, yet when I prepared to leave he wanted to keep me with him. I told him my mother would be alarmed, adding that Mesdemoiselles Augusté were expecting me for supper. At this mention of a supper of school girls (the truth), he smiled sceptically, and when my carriage arrived he stepped in with me, intending at first to accompany me only to the end of the avenue, and ending by going all the way to Paris, where he was surprised and embarrassed to find that only two young women were waiting for me.

The next day he left again without having the slightest explanation with me. I supposed that his estate amused him and could not imagine any reason for his aloofness. Several days passed thus. The Consul inquired why Louis did not come back, and considered it absurd for a newly-married husband to neglect the wife he was supposed to love. I do not know whether he thought we had quarrelled, but at any rate he sent for Louis and as soon as the latter arrived called him into his study. A few moments later my mother and I were sent for: "What is this that I hear, Hortense," the Consul said to me, as I came in. "Has your husband just cause for complaint against you? You whom I thought so gentle. Have you forgotten the duties you have accepted?" — "But what have I done?" I exclaimed. "I have not the slightest idea." — "Your husband complains that during your drawing class you and your friends have no regard for his feelings, that you make fun of him, that he receives none of those marks of esteem which he has a right to expect — What, is it possible," I exclaimed, "that he believes me capable of forgetting myself to such an extent? If I laugh, why must he always think it is at his expense? Why does he not give me his confidence? Why does he not tell me what his wishes are? To please him I am prepared to sacrifice all my pleasures." — "Then," said the Consul, speaking to Louis, "why do you not tell

your grievances ?"—“ Ah, how can I express them ?” replied my husband, “ whenever I speak to her she bursts into tears.” He had hardly finished speaking when the Consul, losing his temper, exclaimed : “ You do not deserve such a wife. She feels your reproaches, she weeps, and, instead of being touched, you are irritated by her tears ! . . . Do you not feel the joy of knowing you are to become a father ?” As he spoke, his deep emotion betrayed his grief that that happiness was denied him. He went on more gently. “ At least appreciate that sign of her affection. You should be at her knees, caring for her, cherishing her ; instead of that you hurt her. Ah, Louis, you who I thought were so kind-hearted, so sensitive, I no longer know you.”

The Consul's anger dried my tears. I was no longer vexed with my husband. I pitied him for having incurred this humiliation. Moreover, I was well aware that such a scene would tend to irritate his temper rather than calm it. From that time constraint and embarrassment increased in our home life.

Although he had very good health, my husband had one hand which wasted and grew weaker and caused him anxiety.* He wished to take the waters at Barège in the Pyrenées. The Consul protested against the impropriety of this journey, and the comments it was likely to provoke. “ People will say I have given my step-daughter to a cripple and an invalid !” But it was he who yielded in the end, for his brother never yielded in anything.

Louis wished to take me with him. My mother objected and frightened me by pointing out both the disastrous effects that so long a journey might have upon my pregnancy, and my duties towards the child I was about to bring into the world. I was torn between these duties and the obedience I owed my husband. For his part, he exacted from me a formal declaration to my mother and the Consul that I wished to accompany him no matter what might be the result. “ Please allow me,” I said, “ to remain neutral and only obey your wishes when you have expressed them.” He often woke me in the middle of the night to make me promise to follow him everywhere,

* See Note p 270.
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even though he might declare he did not wish me to do so

My state of health and the need of sleep, natural to my age, made me very impatient on these occasions, although I managed to conceal the fact. I pointed out to him gently that I was anxious to go to sleep. He seemed not to care much about this, but repeated that he was the unhappiest man in the world, that he adored me, that I evidently did not care for him, as I refused to sacrifice my mother and her idle fears to him, and that a woman does not miscarry if she travel in a comfortable vehicle. "I will follow you," I told him, "no matter what my mother and my doctor say, but, should a misfortune occur, at least let me have the consolation of knowing that it was a result of your orders, not through any fault of my own." It never occurred to him to postpone his journey to Barège, and he left after having given up the idea of taking me with him. He wept freely when he left me, and I was touched by his tears. Anyone who at that moment had told me that I did not love my husband dearly would have seemed my greatest enemy. But a moment sufficed to undeceive me. I shall never forget the painful sensation I had, when as I heard the carriage that was taking Louis from me roll away, I felt that I was breathing more freely.

I stayed with my mother during my husband's absence. His cold and constrained letters showed clearly enough that he was unhappy, that his imagination had dreamed of greater happiness than I could offer him. So each time word came from him my heart beat violently, and each time I reproached myself for not knowing how to make him happy.

My mother went to Plombières for her health and left me to do the honours at Malmaison. All the young ladies who stayed with me there were in my condition. We spent our mornings sitting together embroidering little caps for the children we expected, and talking about our plans for them. Not until six o'clock did we go down to the drawing room. The Consul came to dine at five in the evening when he did no work would pass of his with me. He was so absent minded that I always was, I felt

acquiring a reputation of great skill. The truth is that the Consul was a poor player, always thinking more about other things than about the game. Not particularly polite as a rule, grave rather than gay, he frightened all our young ladies, who only dared answer *yes* and *no* to the curt sentences in which he addressed them. For this reason my mother, although highly susceptible, was never at all alarmed to know that even the prettiest women were living near her husband.

On Sundays singers were sent for from Paris. Among them was a certain Mademoiselle Rolandeau, a pretty actress. I do not know whether the Consul paid any attention to her, but I received a letter from my mother filled with reproaches. She had heard, she said, that this actress had come to Malmaison. I should not have allowed it. Yet it was none of my business. My mother, being wounded, did not weigh her words or acts. She suddenly left Plombières, and I have often heard the Consul blame her for having sacrificed the care of her health and maybe the possibility of having children to an impulse of ill-considered jealousy.

Meanwhile the time for the birth of my child drew near. The house I was living in was too small, and the Consul gave me another one, very charming, but small, too, and with a delightful garden. I moved in and awaited the return of my husband.*

The birth of a child bearing the name of Bonaparte was an event of considerable interest to all France. The Consul had been appointed Consul for life,* but he had no son. The fact that he had restored order made him more and more popular every day, and seemed already to indicate on the part of the public a desire to settle the supreme power in his family.

I had been taught to believe that unless a mother is bled during her pregnancy her child would be dull and liable to serious diseases. So, though I was in perfect health, I kept worrying my doctor about this imaginary need of a bleeding. I had already had an incision made in my arm with a lancet, after a walk where I had been caught in the rain, but the vein was so faintly visible that the

* See Note p 271

surgeon had succeeded only at the second incision, and this blood-letting, which might have been harmless at another time, affected my nerves. As chance would have it my husband returned that same day. Although I knew I did not love him I was distressed by his cold manner, for though I no longer dreamed of being happy myself, I still wished to make him so. In spite of his far from optimistic disposition, I redoubled my efforts, but in vain. I only did myself harm, and made myself more unhappy.

With my doctor* I had calculated the date when my child should be born. He told me that women often made mistakes of two and even three weeks, especially if it were a boy, and that he would not be surprised if the event took place on a day he mentioned, and which was exactly the first of October. As I had been married on the third of January, that would have made just three days less than nine months after my marriage. Surprised and laughing, I hastened to tell this to my husband, but he replied gloweringly, 'If such a thing happened I would never see you again as long as I lived.'—'What,' I exclaimed in despair, 'can it be that you suspect me?'—"No, I know the truth. But it is on account of what people would say."—Imagine my fears and at the same time the delight with which I saw the first few days of October slip by. But the risk I had run of being publicly shamed by the man who should have been my protector had been a cruel blow. I felt that I was alone, without guide or comforter on earth, with no help but such as I could find in my own heart, and no other consolation than my conscience.

On October 9th there was a large reception at the Tuileries. I attended it, and on the tenth, just nine months after the time I had been alone with my husband at Malmaison, I was seized with such intense pains that my brother, who had come to see me, hurried off to tell my mother. She arrived at Saint Cloud and took the tenderest care of me. Nor did my husband leave my side even for an instant. Both were overjoyed when at nine o'clock in the evening, I gave birth to a boy. "It is a girl," the women cried. "Would not be Dauphin!"—The king and

pleased me as well as my husband, who silenced them at once. The Consul came to see me two days later, very glad that I had a boy.* As for me, my joy was inexpressible. I did not let my son's cradle be taken out of the room for a moment. I regretted bitterly not to be able to nurse him, but my husband and mother both opposed my wishes, pointing out how difficult it was to nurse a child before one was twenty. The welfare of my son must come before everything. But indeed had I been his nurse I could not have tended him more constantly, more tenderly than I did. When I was well enough to get up again, if he was not able to go out I stayed at home. I was unhappy the moment he and I were separated. My husband worshipped him as much as I did, and as he happened to be following a treatment just then, which did not allow him to go out, the child was always in his room. The baby was the only bright spot in our home, which otherwise was as bleak and cold as ever. Adèle came occasionally to see me in the morning. She was my only companion.

One day the Consul called with my mother.* Arrived at not finding my husband at home he said : coming and walked about alone in the garden. My mother informed me that he had come with the intention of asking for our son, whom he wished to adopt. This idea was dreadful to me, but as I submitted the future of our child to Providence, I dared not formulate a wish. In the evening Caroline told me that the rest of the Bonaparte family, on being informed of the Consul's intention, had opposed it vigorously, that his brother had even written to him

person, spoke to me about his wish to adopt an heir and seemed hurt by my husband's letter. I asked him not to oblige me to take sides on such a question, and to allow me to obey a husband who was alarmed, perhaps justly, to see so much antagonism centre about his child. The Consul was silent for a moment, and then said "I will pass a law that will at least make me the master of my family."

As Louis feared to spend the winter in Paris, it was decided that we should go to Italy. The Consul gave his consent to the plan on condition that our journey took place with a certain amount of state. The ladies who were to receive me in each town had already been chosen, the gifts I was to make them had already been bought, the moment of our departure had come. My mother had chosen as my lady-in-waiting Madame de Boubers, daughter of the Chevalier de Folard, who lost her fortune in the Revolution. She was noted for her courage and her high moral standards. My husband detested having anyone to stay with us. It was useless for me to point out to him that our social position made this inevitable, he constantly accused his brother of wishing to annoy him, he could not understand why people should not be allowed to travel as they pleased. When the question of taking his son with us came up, and the Consul objected to it on account of the extreme youth of a child who was important to all France, Louis was unable to restrain his anger. All these petty trifles made him so unhappy that I did not know what to do to pacify him. The idea of leaving his son in the care of his brother excited him violently. Finally the tears he saw me shed, as the moment approached when I would be separated from the child I loved so dearly, seemed to make him decide to give up the trip to Italy, and instead go to Montpellier alone in order to consult the physicians there. He explained to me in an entirely natural manner that he was leaving me behind in order that his son should not leave home. The reason seemed a good one to me. I accepted the suggestion. Was this intended as a trap, I said, he reproached me for it. He misinterpreted the tears a mother shed at the thought of leaving her son. He declared it was clear I did not love him more than I did the

accompanied him, and had preferred to stay with my child. Yet it was he who had proposed this arrangement. Nevertheless, he wrote affectionately enough, but his letters were full of sentences and of advice which I could not understand.

When he was leaving he forbade me very solemnly to go to live at Saint-Cloud under any pretext when the Consul and my mother went there, and never to stay there overnight. I protested that this would seem very extraordinary and asked what explanation I could give to my mother.—“None,” he replied. “You are no longer a child. A married woman should stay at home. You can go and dine there, but I warn you that if you stay I shall separate from you.” I was unable to obtain any enlightenment. I kept thinking how I should behave, what explanation I could give to my mother, who would certainly wish to have me with her. Finally I thought I had found a way out. I arranged to take so many lessons that all my mornings were occupied by the harp or the piano, singing or painting. I went to dine at Saint-Cloud with my son, who never left me, and I returned in the evening in order not to miss my lesson the next morning. My mother did not dare say anything, although several times she saw me drive off in very bad weather, despite having urged me to stay.

It happened one day that the Consul, who wished to drive a six-horse coach, met with an accident, and was thrown a distance of twenty paces.* My mother’s alarm was so great that her health was affected. She begged me to remain with her. What was I to do? Torn between the threats of my husband, the entreaties of my mother, between fear and filial duty, I did not know what decision to take when my mother burst into tears and exclaimed, “My daughter no longer loves me.”—“It is quite simple,” added the Consul, “Hortense is enjoying herself in Paris. We are old, our company bores her.” I was in torture. The thought that my mother could imagine that I no longer loved her and that I would sacrifice the joy of nursing her for some frivolous amusement was so utterly unbearable that I threw caution to the winds and told all about my husband’s orders.

* See Note p 271

"What," said the Consul, springing up suddenly, "your husband issued such an order? What can be his reason? Does he get his information from the English slander-sheets? Write him that a husband cannot separate a daughter from her mother. With her husband far away, where can she be better off than with her natural protector? A woman blameless as you are has the right to speak her mind firmly and not to accept such ridiculous restrictions." I soon realized the mistake I had made in revealing my secret. On the one hand, the Consul's anger against Louis worried me dreadfully, on the other, my mother, who was incapable of keeping any of her feelings to herself, complained to the ladies-in-waiting of Louis's strange idea of forbidding me to stay with her. The public soon heard about it, and drew its own conclusions. People are never interested in the truth. The new and strange is what appeals to the idle crowd who make up society. My husband, informed that I had not obeyed his orders, now wrote me only cold, distant notes. A journey my mother and the Consul made through Belgium put an end to this painful situation.

They returned, after having been received everywhere with the greatest enthusiasm, and I, with my son, continued to dine daily at the Tuileries. The Consul made him sit in the middle of the table and let him touch everything. He gave him wine and coffee, and though he frequently made the child cry by pinching his cheek or by hugging him too hard, he had known how to win his affection, and could not come into the room without my son stretching out his arms toward him. This seemed to please my stepfather, and even when he was most pre-occupied his sombre face would brighten. One day,* when a morning reception was being held in my mother's apartment, where ladies were at that time presented to the Consul before being admitted to the Court circles, we waited several moments for him to come downstairs. My son was in his nurse's arms. The Consul came in with a pleasant, red air which made us think that the conversation would not be a long one and indeed he proceeded at once with a few words, when my son, who was tired of waiting, and had

out his arms. The Consul noticed this, took him and continued to walk back and forth. We followed him with our eyes; he seemed so absent-minded that I feared he might forget the precious burden he was carrying. However, after a little while he handed baby back to his nurse, still without having said a word. Annoyed at being motionless once more the little boy began to cry and once more stretched out his arms. The Consul took him again, and this performance lasted half an hour without one word having been spoken. Finally the arrival of the Ambassadors was announced. We entered the drawing-room. The Consul spoke a few words to the ladies, but he soon stepped up to Whitworth, the English Ambassador, and the entire room heard the stinging reproaches with which he assailed him. He spoke of the treaties the English had violated, of the bad faith of their Cabinet. I cannot recall his expressions, but the tone in which they were uttered made everyone dumb with surprise and fear, for in his anger he had forgotten the presence of other people. My mother continued talking to the ladies and tried to cover his voice by affectionate words so as to palliate the bad effect she feared so violent a discussion would produce.

On his return to his study the Consul seemed relieved of a great weight. His anger had vanished. It was my mother and I who now looked grave. "Well," he said, half-laughing, "what is the matter? What has happened?" My mother reproved him gently, saying, "You make everyone tremble. Those ladies who did not know you, who had been so happy to see you, what must they think of you now? Instead of being pleasant and kind to them, you insist on talking politics. It really wasn't the right moment."—"Do you mean to say they heard me?" continued the Consul. "It's true I was wrong. I did not want to come down to-day. Talleyrand had been telling me things that annoyed me, and then that great booby of an ambassador came and stuck himself right under my nose." The next day all Paris was talking of the scene. It marked the end of the peace. Hostilities were renewed shortly afterwards.

By way of retaliation for the English having seized

French frigates without warning, the Consul gave orders to arrest as prisoners of war all the English travelling in France. This measure* seemed to us so unfair that we were deeply grieved about it. We could not hide our sorrow at seeing him act in such a way. "What is neither great nor noble must never come from you," declared my mother. He took her in his arms and kissed her as he replied, "You are children, both of you."

The Consul was more susceptible to criticism than he cared to admit. As he reflected deeply before making up his mind, his will became inflexible, and yet, if his plans did not coincide with that straight line of conduct which commands popular approval, he saw a weak side to them, which he tried to strengthen by the stern look he put on. But once his order had been carried out, the more severe he had been beforehand so much the more gracious he became afterwards. This was the moment to ask favours of him. For to accord them then was not to show weakness, the one thing he always feared. At such times his only wish was to be obliging and to make you forget his severity. My mother, who saw him one day in this good-natured mood, asked permission for an Englishman, who had done our family some favours in Martinique, to be allowed to remain in Paris. He granted her request. Encouraged by her success, I in turn asked the Consul to intervene on behalf of another Englishman who, so I was told, was unhappy at being shut up at Fontainebleau*. Immediately both orders were written by Eugène, who happened to be present, and signed by the Consul himself. A fortunate incident for our protégés, who were never afterwards disturbed in any way by the authorities.

Shortly afterwards my husband returned from Montpellier,† still cold towards me without telling me why. This state of things, distressing and painful though it was, was preferable to those continual reproaches which used to disturb my nights and sadden my days. The love I felt for my son filled my heart, and I dared no longer bewail my fate since I had an outlet for my passionate affections. Had I been possessed of the same feelings, my husband a little natural pride and self-respect would have

made this way of life go on for a long time, but the memory of his tears when about to leave me, and the sad certainty that he inspired me with dread rather than love, made it seem culpable to prolong a state of things which was perhaps even more painful to him than to me. The better pleased I felt at being left alone, the more I considered it my duty to advance and meet him half-way. But what an effort it was to make the first step ! What could I say to a man whose icy manner seemed both a reproach and an indictment ? The very strength of my repulsion helped me to overcome it. Whenever I know a thing to be right, a violent impulse urges me to do it, no matter what suffering it may cost me. So I told my husband that he was risking both his happiness and mine, that his continual doubt of my affection was both an injury and an insult. The violence I had put upon myself to take this step, the agitation into which it threw me, combined to make me shed tears which might have been attributed to unrequited affection. Louis was touched, nevertheless he replied, "We will remain apart. I am happier so."

I do not know what was passing in his mind, but despite the tenderness he showed me he hurried away in a state of extreme agitation. I remained alone, as pleased with myself as though I had performed an act of the greatest heroism. My conscience was at rest. No longer could I be held responsible for our misunderstanding. I met my husband the next day with a calm that surprised him. He kept glancing at me frequently, expecting to find some trace of sorrow in my eyes, but all he could see there was the serenity that comes from a clear conscience. Busying myself continually with my son, I laughed and danced about with the child and did not appear more chagrined than before our explanation. Several days passed thus, then at last Louis told me that his mind was made up and that he wished to be reconciled with me. At the time this only appeared strange to me, but since then, having become familiar with his unfortunate, distrustful disposition, I realize that my advances had aroused suspicions which my subsequent calm had dispelled. "You assured me," I replied, "that you were happier away from me. I can't

forget it. Let us be friends, but do not talk of coming together again" He left me in anger and hastened to tell his family that he wished to leave me. At this news my brother, my mother, the Consul, Lucien, everybody sought to reconcile us, and their combined efforts succeeded once again. Louis's only just cause for complaint was that I did not love him sufficiently.

About this time he suffered a very great vexation. The Consul appointed him brigadier-general. I have never seen a man so worried. He accused his brother of being disagreeable to him on purpose. The same scene took place when he was made a member of the Conseil d'Etat. It was useless for me to say by way of consolation that it was quite natural for his brother to act as he did, as he could not guess that Louis would be made unhappy by a proposition which would have delighted so many men. These considerations had no effect. He was fond of his regiment, and his grief at the idea of leaving it was so keen that the Consul allowed him to remain in command in spite of his new rank. His brigade was stationed at Compiègne, and it was there we spent the winter*. I took my son and Madame de Boubers with me. The reviews, the beautiful balls, the receptions which were given in my honour, were the only notable incidents of our stay.

While we were at Compiègne I was expecting my second child. My husband often said to me, "I only ask one thing of you, it is that this child shall be like me."—"How am I to manage that?" I would reply—"If you love me, if you think often enough about me, he will look like me. Then I shall adore you and be the happiest man in all the world." I could not help smiling at the wish so solemnly expressed, and yet the importance attached to it sometimes troubled me in view of the future. However, his wish was fulfilled, but he was not able to realize it till much later, for it is rare for a child at birth to have any clearly defined features.

The conspiracy of George Drouot was talked of in Paris. The city wore a new aspect. It seemed in a state of siege. The Consul's guards were increased, and the

around the walls. People could not walk beyond the gates. The Parisians flocked to take note of this new order of things. They were curious, surprised, but neither alarmed nor displeased, although deprived of some of their amusements. For that matter they knew that only the conspirators were being sought for, and within the walls receptions and balls followed one another as usual.

Every night after having made their tour of inspection, the officers came back and danced as though nothing was disturbing the public peace, and after a time all the conspirators were arrested. General Murat had then just been made military governor of Paris.

Shortly after my marriage,* I had seen a good deal of Madame Moreau, the daughter of Madame Hulot, who owned property in Mauritius.* She was pretty and gifted, but rather affected and even stiff in her manner. Her chief characteristic was her ambition, and her receptions were reputed to be the most fashionable in Paris. She gave sumptuous balls, which were attended by all the nobility of the Faubourg Saint-Germain, and was on intimate terms with persons who were known for their hatred to the existing government.

When General Moreau was arrested,* cries of indignation were raised throughout the Faubourg. The Consul was accused of jealousy, and the conspirators found many sympathizers. I am well aware that political crimes always deserve a certain indulgence. But is not our moral sense revolted by those which involve assassination? The principal persons involved in this conspiracy were the Generals Moreau, Lajolais, Pichegru, George, and Messieurs de Polignac and de Rivière. The two latter, just back from England and prominent on account of their names, made it appear that a plot to kill the Consul was a thing any gentleman could take part in, and this view prevailed in a number of salons. Consequently their death sentence was received with astonishment. I know not whether the opinions of others are more communicable when they are passionately pleaded, or whether, since the Consul had not been killed, my pity turned to those who were about to die, but in any case these condemnations filled me with

* See Note p 272.

grief, and our one thought was how to secure their repeal.

It was agreed with my mother that I should take the daughter of General Laplais to Saint-Cloud, and that Caroline should escort the sister of another condemned man, and that they were to throw themselves at the feet of the Consul. Even now I cannot describe without emotion the state I was in. The memory of my father dying on the scaffold, without any intervention on his behalf, touched me and increased my pity for the unhappy girl who accompanied me. The hope of saving a man from execution, the fear of failure, moved me with such varied feelings that I arrived at Saint-Cloud all in tears, a thousand times more wrought up than my young companion, who looked at me with surprise. Fathers by might well have been mistaken as to which of us was about to plead for her father's life. My mother was uneasy as to the effect these scenes might have on my health. The Consul was touched and hastened to relieve my distress by granting my prayer. Caroline was also successful with her protégé. My mother had taken upon herself the defence of those who were the most guilty. The Consul resisted in the case of Messieurs de Polignat and de Rivière. They were the aides-de-camp of the Comte d'Artois, and had been sent from England expressly to assassinate the head of the French Government. He thought that clemency in this instance would encourage further attempts, but my mother importuned him until her grief obtained what policy had refused. Moreau had not been condemned to death. His wife begged that he be allowed to go to America and came to see me. She was unhappy. I mingled my tears with hers. I intervened, and the Consul accorded everything without any difficulty.

My house was very close to that of Caroline who had bought the Thélusson mansion in the Rue Cuvier. My husband and I went there every day. One evening Caroline said to me sadly, 'They have just taken the Duc de Berry to the fortress of Vincennes. His trial will take place to-night.' This news struck me with dismay. In my ignorance of all political events, we could not understand

this arrest; but that a member of the family of the former Kings of France should have been seized, brought to Paris, and tried in one night, seemed a sinister event, and that this act of severity should take place under the rule of the Consul, who had dried so many tears, bound up so many wounds, grieved us on his account. He was too great in our sight to need such severity.

The next day I went early to Malmaison. There I found my mother in the greatest consternation. She had just learned that the Duc d'Enghien had been shot that morning at day-break, and her grief was intense not only for the victim, but also for the Consul. "It is Napoleon's first fault."

She said: "His fame has been so stainless! Who can have advised him thus? If only I had known in time I should have persuaded him. His grieved expression when he told me proved to me that it was not by his orders, but when he saw my tears he exclaimed vehemently, 'Do you want to see me assassinated?'"

My mother kept repeating over and over again, "Who can have influenced him?" I said nothing and shared her emotions. Just then Caulaincourt entered the room. He had been away on a mission to Strasbourg and Carlsruhe, and had only that moment returned: "You have heard the dreadful news?" my mother asked him.—"What news, Madame?"—"The Duc d'Enghien has been executed."—"Great God," cried Caulaincourt. "Is it possible? Has the Consul involved me in some way in the matter?"—Tears flowed down his cheeks. "But where have you been?" enquired my mother.—"On a mission near Strasbourg, and to deliver a letter at Carlsruhe. That is all I know about it."—"When I heard that you were sent to the Rhine," replied my mother, "I feared you had been employed on some such disastrous mission."—"Would to God that I had!" exclaimed Caulaincourt. "I would have had the young prince warned. I cannot forget that I was brought up with him, that I was his gentleman-in-waiting, and if the Consul had given me such an order I should only have carried it out by saving the Prince's life." I heard every word that I am recording.

How did it happen therefore that the public should have so insistently accused Caulaincourt of having led the prince into a trap? Is it more difficult to believe the truth than falsehood? I here add what else I learned in regard to this matter.

A royalist insurgent condemned to death had sought to obtain pardon by confessing everything he knew about the conspiracy. He declared that Moreau had seen George in Paris and likewise another person whom he did not know, but whom everyone treated with the greatest respect. At the time this person was thought to be Prince of the House of Bourbon. The Duc d'Enghien lived near the Rhine; he was frequently away from home, and was in communication with the Consul's enemies in France. Assassins who had crossed over from England had landed on the sea-coast, the Consul's life was constantly being threatened. Those who had taken part in the Revolution feared the return of the family it had driven from the throne. They were now in office, and a change would threaten their position. All these motives combined to bring about the arrest of the Duke. General Ordener crossed the river in row-boats with a strong detachment of troops (it was he himself who told me about it). He brought the Duc d'Enghien to Paris. The Court which tried him was composed of several colonels and presided over by General Hulin. Savary only attended the trial as a spectator; he was not one of the judges, but his regiment being stationed at Vincennes, his going there was a precautionary measure. General Murat, Governor of Paris, had given orders to that effect. He had received those orders from Monsieur de Talleyrand, who remained with him until five o'clock in the morning. Colonel Savary, while on his way to Malmaison to report what had taken place, met the Prefect of Police, whom the Consul had ordered to go and question the prisoner, and who was much surprised to learn that the prisoner no longer lived. Savary told the Consul still more deeply moved than Talleyrand of this sudden execution. He exclaimed, "What a crime! What a crime!" and did not speak again.

The drawing-rooms of Paris re-echoed with imaginary details about the Consul and Caulaincourt. The latter, it was said, had brought the Prince back in his own carriage, and had treated him in a shameful manner; the Consul was supposed to have ordered that the Duke be shot with a lantern on his heart and without allowing him to express his last wishes. All these tales were false, and evidently came from Monsieur de Talleyrand, who to turn suspicion from himself spread this odious gossip, and wanted to belittle the act itself in the horror that surrounded it.

Monsieur de Talleyrand's ancient lineage, as well as his former ties with the aristocracy, had always given him an immense influence in the Faubourg Saint-Germain, and though he was Minister during the Republic, Minister during the Consulate, Minister during the Empire, renegade priest who had taken a wife, everything was forgiven him. He obtained plenary absolution ! So no one thought of blaming him for the death of the Duc d'Enghien, of which he was one of the principal instigators, whereas Caulaincourt and Savary, who were innocent, were constantly reproached with it. One day my mother repeated to me something the Emperor had said when he was angry with Talleyrand. "It's queer of him to gain popularity at my expense. Was it I who knew the Duc d'Enghien ? Was it I who wanted to kill him ?"

My knowledge of the Emperor's character convinces me that although the suddenness of the execution took him by surprise he never sought to disculpate himself. As weakness was the last fault he was willing to admit, he would have said, I am certain : "If I did such-and-such a thing I had the right to do it." I may add in support of this opinion a phrase of his which was repeated to me : "Has any family the right to commit crimes with impunity ?" All the conspirators were tried. I pardoned many who sought to kill me, but I could not pardon everyone who tried to betray France by bringing back a state of things which had ruined her."

And indeed it was after this event that the men who had supported the Revolution rallied round the Consul. "There will be no second Monk, I warrant," they declared,

* See Note p 272
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"for one can count on *him*" It was later that I learned these details, the significance of which I leave to the reader's judgment The Duc d'Enghien, cut off in the flower of his manhood, appeared to our eyes the pathetic victim of a policy we did not understand, but whose result we deplored

These incidents brought about a great event. The fate of France, which the Consul had established on firmer ground, seemed to be linked to his, and to depend on his existence The one thing lacking was stability for the future To secure this, the Empire was created The Consul was appointed Emperor of the French Republic (December 1st, 1804), and the new dynasty instituted in his family consisted only of Joseph and his children and Louis and ours

Lucien was excluded because he had just married a woman who did not please the Consul, and whom he had given his word of honour not to marry But the promise was forgotten at the birth of a son, and he braved his brother's anger

In connection with this, Caroline and I received a severe rebuke from the Consul Lucien had seized the opportunity of his brother's absence at Boulogne to marry and to announce his marriage to all the family, as well as to my mother, who had remained at Saint-Cloud and felt that she must make no answer until she was authorized by the Consul to do so As for my husband, he said to me, "*Joseph is the eldest of us all, where he leads I must follow,*" and without consulting the Consul (whose violent opposition to the match we suspected) the marriage was acknowledged, since what is done cannot be undone Lucien came to see us with his wife, who really was remarkably beautiful, and we went once, my husband and I, to return her call In my position I could not do otherwise than follow my husband's lead So I did as he wished But the Consul on his return, having heard of this recognition, scolded both his brothers roundly What he said to others I know not, but one morning when Caroline and I were with my mother he flew into a temper with us such as I had never seen him in before He reproached us for having given the name of "sister" to a woman

whose reputation was not worthy of it. He told us that not only had we failed in the obedience due to him as head of the family, but also we had lacked self-respect towards ourselves. "What!" he exclaimed, walking up and down the room without even looking at us, "I try to restore morality, and a woman like that is brought into my family! I am the head of a nation and responsible not only for my actions, but also for the example that I set. I won't tolerate that vice be set up as a model: the masses have a right to expect virtue from those whom they have raised and put at their head. The nation is moral: the leaders must be so, too. France was ruled long enough by big-wigs who thought they had a right to do anything. He who is not with me is against me. I have duties and I will perform them. I will be inexorable. There! I am sorry that I am not a bastard! Certainly I ought to have been one, for none of you understands me," and he went out without saying good-day to us.

Jérôme, following Lucien's example, had married* without leave, having chosen a young American girl, Miss Elizabeth Patterson. My mother interceded on their behalf, but the Consul remained inflexible, saying that those members of his family who did not recognize him as its head ceased to belong to it.*

* See Note p 272.

CHAPTER V

PRINCESS LOUIS (1804-1806)

Establishment of the Empire—Home life of Princess Louis—Some lunatics—Monsieur de Flahaut—Birth of Napoleon-Louis—Coronation of Napoleon and Josephine—The Emperor and Madame Duchâtel—Louis's jealousy—A visit to the Camp at Boulogne—Royal marriages—An innocent prank.

Was the Consul wise or unwise in establishing the Empire? This is a question which I do not feel myself qualified to discuss. I can only record what I saw.

All political parties gathered round him. Even those most difficult to win, the Republicans, did not blush to give their adherence to the Empire. And if the powerful character of Napoleon made them fear for their idol, liberty, his newly-established dynasty reassured them as to equality. Under the rule of one who owed his rank entirely to his own abilities, merit alone could achieve distinction. Then, too, those rewards which a sovereign can bestow, completely won over those who thought that all the distinctions they received were their due.

The nobility also sought and found security in the shadow of the throne. Their familiarity with court life and their greater social refinement won for them successes which aroused jealousy. Such jealousy was groundless. The Emperor, who wished to end the Revolution by preserving the good it had accomplished and effacing the memory of its crimes, could not exclude the nobles, for they, despite their faults, were French citizens, and on account of their misfortunes they deserved protection. He always held the scales equally balanced, without restoring to the nobility either their privileges or their influence.

As for foreign sovereigns, they regarded this scene

to royal government as a sort of guarantee more in keeping with the prevailing system of government in Europe, which had been menaced by democratic theories, and for a while they suspended their hostility towards a country no longer divided against itself. So that the only visible enemies left were England, animated by a spirit of rivalry, a few royalists clinging to their memories, and a few stubborn Republicans.

It will be difficult to believe that though I ought to have been deeply interested in these new events, I paid very little attention to them. My domestic sorrows increased from day to day. What could I do to make happy a man who did not know the meaning of the word ? I still hoped to succeed; my life, my days revolved about this problem; nothing else mattered to me. Therefore I was very much surprised when one day Caroline came to see me and for the first time I heard that the Consul was about to be made Emperor. "People say," she added, "that only Joseph and Louis are mentioned as members of the new dynasty in the decree of the Senate. What ! your children are to be princes, heirs to the throne of France, and my children, their cousins, nobodies ? I will never endure such injustice. I will bring them up to demand their rights, to reconquer them if necessary."

I could not sympathize greatly with Caroline's outburst, since her husband was, after all, only the Consul's brother-in-law, but I realized that such a law would make enemies for my children, and the idea distressed me. By way of consolation, I expressed my doubts as to the accuracy of the reports. In vain. Nothing would quiet her. Her sister, Elisa, shared her feelings and stimulated them. They made such a to-do that their complaints reached the ears of the Consul, who one day said,* "Really, if one listened to my sisters, one would believe that I had robbed my family of the heritage of the late king, our father." This epigram was repeated all over Paris and thought very witty. For all that, the Emperor's sisters were made princesses and had their royal household, just as much as Princess Joseph and myself.

One morning, when I went to see my

* See Note p 272

Cloud, I found her surrounded by various officials, who were paying their respects to her as Empress of the French. Then, and then only, did I know that Caroline's fears were justified. I cannot yet understand why so important an event made so little impression on me. Doubtless partly because it made little difference in my social position, which was already so prominent doubtless too, because I was entirely wrapped up in my private troubles. It was necessary, however, to receive all the officials and the foreign ambassadors who called to offer the congratulations of their sovereigns.

Since the behaviour of the upper class attracts the notice and provokes the comment, favourable or otherwise, of the rest of the population, it was natural that my domestic troubles should arouse sympathy in some people and that those troubles should have been severely criticized by others. But how was it that out-and-out madmen should be attracted by what they heard of me?

A young Prussian was sent to Paris to secure for a Berlin newspaper the noteworthy productions of our literature. He lived in the Rue Saint-Lazare, and, doubtless, from his windows often saw me in my garden playing with my son or carrying him about in my arms. This sight aroused his frantic enthusiasm, as though rank could affect the sentiments of a mother towards her child. Instead of writing about literature he wrote constantly about me. He followed me everywhere. Any little alms I might happen to bestow would be described with such a wealth of detail that his editor was obliged to point out to him that he was not in Paris to write exclusively about *la Princesse Louis*, and that unless he would resume his regular news letters he would be dismissed. This warning had no effect. Fearing that the young man's mind had become affected, the editor sent word to his correspondent's parents. Someone came to take him home. He had gone mad.

There was also the Chevalier d'Arzac, a returned émigré, who followed me constantly for six years. At my walks, at the play, at Malmaison, he dogged my steps, and one day he stopped the Consul to ask for the hand of his

daughter in marriage. Another day it was he instead of my mother who followed me into my carriage, and I saw him pulled out by the footmen. He thought that I was his wife before God, and that we should be united in Heaven. His family recalled him to Lyons, and I know not what has become of him.

Every time that I was teased about these delusions I answered that it was just because these poor men were mad that they paid attention to me, and this was the exact truth. Happily my husband did not trouble himself about these passions, which were known to all Paris, and this, judging by his usual suspiciousness, was really an extraordinary thing.

I should find it difficult to describe the sadness that took a firmer hold of me from day to day. The idea that my husband did not respect me, me, to whom respect had always been such a necessity, sometimes drove me to a despair which in due course gave way to a resolve to win back what I felt to be my right. I did not know then that passion while it lasts can neither foresee the future nor revise the past. Besides, as I had nothing to conceal I was always calm, and if I no longer laughed and was unhappy, I was as yet spared the severest trial of all, when one must struggle not only against others, but also against oneself. Fate held that supreme ordeal in reserve for me.

Since my marriage, whenever a young man appeared who was pleasing in looks or manner, the fear that I might be attracted towards him, even for an instant, put me on my guard. At dances I was in request, often to an embarrassing extent. People would stand on chairs to see me dance. I enjoyed dancing so much in itself that I could not help being annoyed by this attention. One evening, a pleasant, thoughtless young man of my own age, a Monsieur de Flahaut,* in a moment of heedless enthusiasm applauded me. I was fearfully annoyed by this noisy approval, which seemed to me in the worst possible taste. I went up to his mother and asked her to tell her son that I danced for my own amusement and not to be clapped.

The next day they both called to apologize. My mother

* See Note p 272.

had been instrumental in having Madame de Flahaut's name removed from the list of émigrés, and she was much attached to us. Her son had joined the army when he was fifteen *. My husband had placed him in his regiment, and had done a great deal for him and later Murat took him for aide-de-camp. He was received intimately in both our houses, but in spite of his talents and pleasing appearance, his heedlessness had prevented me from thinking of him otherwise than as a pleasant youth, in no way dangerous. He often called to see Louis and felt obliged to pay his respects to me before leaving the house.

As I liked to have some occupation in the morning I frequently declined to receive him, except when I had my singing lesson and then, as we had the same master, we sang duets together. One day, when he was announced, and I supposed that he was still in the ante-room, I answered rather sharply, "Tell him that I am not at home." He was just behind the servant and overheard me. I was embarrassed and tried to excuse myself, but was struck by his downcast expression, for one is vexed to inflict even a momentary pain on a man who always looks happy. Then, suddenly Monsieur de Flahaut ceased to appear at our house. I thought that this was due to my rudeness. As he did not attract me in the least I felt no scruple in trying to destroy the unfavourable impression he might have formed of me. I met him at Caroline's, and there I reproached him politely for not coming to see us. He replied assuring me that he had called often but never found me. I considered this simply an excuse, and, in order to convince myself of the fact, I asked our porter for the list of visitors. Sure enough, Monsieur de Flahaut's name did appear frequently. I could not understand what this meant. A riddle haunts one until it has been solved. I wanted the answer to this, and at last found out that my husband, without saying a word to me, had given orders that the young man was not to be admitted. Louis's jealousy in this instance appeared stranger to me than ever. A young man who has nothing that attracts me, whom I consider fickle, to whom I even behave rudely! But the young man will think me insincere.

or, perhaps, coquettish, for I invite him to call and yet refuse him admittance !

At last, one night at a dance, while supper was being served, he came behind my chair and complained that he had been turned away from my door at the time that other visitors were admitted. He felt he might have been spared this mortification in view of the long-standing attachment of his family for mine. I was touched and embarrassed, and to console him said: "It is not my fault, but I beg of you do not call again." I instantly realized my mistake, for, with a glance that surprised me, he exclaimed that he was delighted to learn that it was not I who had refused him admission, and he added with great feeling, "You will never see me again, for the idea that I could cause you inconvenience would be unbearable to me."

The impression his words produced on me may be left to the imagination. Here was a man who was aware of my husband's jealousy. I had made the mistake of revealing it to him. On the other hand, a young madcap, to whom I ought to pay no attention, showed that he sympathized with me sufficiently to promise to avoid me, to respect my peace of mind. This was love as I understood the meaning of the word. I was overcome with surprise at being, for the first time in my life, dissatisfied with my own conduct, and at finding in a young man of the world a heart whose purity of sentiment came up to my lofty standards. In spite of myself I often thought of the incident.

My brother asked us to a luncheon at his country place, La Jonchère. The party was a large one. Among the guests was a young Polish countess, who was leaving France the next day. She could not hide her grief; she loved Monsieur de Flahaut,* and was about to bid him farewell. She seemed in despair. He, too, had tears in his eyes and could not conceal his feelings. I was touched and said to myself, "He is indeed capable of love. He suffers. He interests me. I made a mistake when I judged him superficial. He has shown his friendship for me and he shall have mine; he deserves it, and I can

* See Note p. 273.

give it, for as he loves another woman he is harmless to me."

During one of the Emperor's excursions to Boulogne,* Caroline came to see about sending him good wishes for his birthday. Since my letter at the time of his marriage, I had never written to him and together we composed two letters practically alike. The answer to Caroline was merely dictated to a secretary and signed by the Emperor. The answer to me was charming and entirely in the Emperor's own hand-writing. Caroline, vexed at the difference, complained of being slighted. She did not say it was my fault, but, quite naturally, a little jealousy was mixed with her annoyance.

My mother had gone to take the waters at Aix-la Chapelle. The Emperor was to join her there after his stay at Boulogne and they were to visit Belgium, and the banks of the Rhine together. At Aix-la-Chapelle, Mother made herself much loved, as she did everywhere she went, and the Emperor on his arrival was received with great enthusiasm. People were grateful to him for having sent back the relics, which since the days of Charlemagne had been the glory of the city. The dean and chapter and the municipal authorities felt that the way they could best show their gratitude to the man whom they looked upon as a new Charlemagne was to present him with an object which had belonged to his great predecessor. They selected a talisman which Charlemagne always wore when going into battle, and which had been found still attached to his collar when his tomb was opened in the year [blank in the original].*

My mother requested that, in addition to this relic, they would add a piece of the bone from Charlemagne's arm, which was preserved in a shrine, a little statue of the Virgin supposed to have been carved by Saint Luke and a bit of the four great relics [a linen robe of the Virgin, the swaddling clothes of the infant Christ, the cloth that had enveloped Christ on the Cross and the handkerchief in which had been wrapped the head of John the Baptist.] I still have all these objects.

During their stay in Belgium, the Emperor and the

* See Note p. 272.

Empress received the visits of all the princes and princesses of the small German states who wished to re-unite their interests to the policy of France. It seemed to them that the title of Emperor conferred more weight and stability on the ruler of the French nation. They also found it more natural to pay homage to an Emperor, to be dependent on him, to look towards him for protection and defence, rather than to a ruler holding office for a limited period of years, successor to those various governments which had followed one another so rapidly and whose authority was equally precarious.

The Emperor met these princes at Mayence, reviewed his troops, and, before them, ordered Eugène to command the manœuvres. The public therefore jumped to the conclusion that an alliance was about to take place between my brother and one of those royal families of Germany who had hastened to present their respects to the Emperor. So quickly had the imperial power taken rank, even in the eyes of its enemies !

At this time my husband went to Plombières for his health, and from there to Turin to preside over the deliberations of the electoral college. As I was about to have my second child, I could not accompany him and remained in Paris.

I led a life that would have been peaceable enough had it not been for a sentiment which was already beginning to disturb my rest. I was far from realizing it. When people talked to me I tried to turn the conversation on the feelings of those who are in love; I trembled at the thought that I might experience those feelings, and if love was described as a state of passion and frenzy, I breathed more freely, saying to myself, "What a relief ! Then I cannot be in love."

I went daily to the Bois de Boulogne accompanied by Madame de Boubers, and, frequently, by Monsieur Lavallette. Monsieur de Flahaut rode there regularly. Sometimes, even, we would take walks with him. I no longer received him at my house, but he always managed to be where I was and never missed an opportunity of speaking of his feeling for me. When he did so my poor

opinion of him revived. I believed that it was not possible to love more than once. He seemed fickle about the young Polish lady whose grief had touched me, and this idea put me on my guard with him. If he spoke of her with respect and sentiment I was reconciled and became his friend, but when he discoursed on his love for me, which, he said, was of long standing, and which his liaison with the Polish woman had not been able to destroy, I would turn away once more. He then became in my eyes a fickle young man, who only sought to please women and obtain their favours. I saw him almost every day. The moment I caught sight of his grey horse in the distance my heart began to beat. And yet I did not think I was in love. When he asked me where I would be on the morrow, I answered I did not know, any other reply would have seemed to me like giving him an appointment. In spite of this I saw him everywhere I went.

Princess Caroline had a handsome estate at Neuilly. She often invited me there. There were boating parties and dances in the evening. One day, apparently quite put out, she said to me, 'Just see how sulky young Monsieur de Flahaut is. I have tried to get him to dance and he declines obstinately to do so. Try and see if you can't persuade him.' I called Monsieur de Flahaut, who told me that that morning at luncheon, before the servants, Caroline had teased him about his assiduous presence wherever I happened to be. He had answered sharply, but the thought that such remarks might hurt my reputation and expose me to malicious gossip, was profoundly disagreeable to him. I was touched by this mark of affection and told him to dance and he did so. Caroline, who wished to see whether I had more influence than she over a young man attached to her household, was convinced by this action that a single word from me carried more weight with him than all her entreaties during an entire evening. From that day she neglected no means of regaining an influence she should never have lost. She appeared to sympathize with him, and sought to cur him of an attachment which could only result in making him unhappy. Never had a word from me allowed

Monsieur de Flahaut to think I was the least interested in him. But the eagerness that was shown to cure him of his infatuation was so great that for a time he avoided me and disappeared entirely from sight. I was at first surprised at this. But my feelings of surprise soon changed to a consternation that enlightened me as to what was going on in my heart. This discovery terrified me. The intensity of my feelings showed them to be reprehensible. It was essential that I should stifle them : and this was all that occupied my thoughts.

Adèle had just returned from a trip to Switzerland with her sister. I threw myself into her arms, burst into tears and told her my troubles. My heart was heavy. I prayed fervently. I was wounded, but I hoped to be cured. I sought to understand my feelings in order to combat them, to find a remedy as powerful as the disease. One day I felt I was on the road to recovery. I had not been to Neuilly for a long time. I went there. Caroline was on the island. I waited in the moonlight for her to come back. She returned giving her arm to Monsieur de Flahaut. This sight caused all my blood to rush to my heart. She, too, appeared so confused at seeing me that I was surprised. As for Monsieur de Flahaut, the more he tried to speak to me the more did I avoid him. But the difficulty I had in doing so, the intense emotion that I felt, made me realize the truth. I loved, and this knowledge completed my despair.

I left in a state of extreme distress, and on returning home instead of going to bed I gave way to my gloomy thoughts. I regretted that my husband was not with me, that he had not returned as I had implored him to when I first felt myself in danger. I would have confided my trouble to him, I had made up my mind to that. Louis loves me, or at any rate he says so. He would understand my grief, would help me overcome a too tender feeling, and escape the perils that result from it. I was absorbed in these thoughts when, suddenly, a man entered my room. 'I uttered a cry, I felt as though I were about to faint. It was my husband. "Oh, how you frightened me!" was all I could say.*

* See Note p 273

I do not know how it happened that the sight of a man appearing suddenly at night when I was alone in my apartment did not seriously affect my health, and hasten the birth of my child. I had no reason to expect to see him, for he was to have stayed some time longer in Turin, and as a matter of fact the day he left he had invited half the town to dine with him. In spite of this, for no known reason, he left, asking one of his aides-de-camp to act as host in his stead. He travelled day and night, left his carriage at the corner of the boulevard, dismissed his escort and entered his own home stealthily on foot. Everyone was asleep. I was the only person awake. A maid was in the room next to mine. He would not let her inform me of his arrival. Without the slightest regard for my state of health or the fact that a sudden fright might result in a miscarriage, he exposed me to all these possible dangers for the sake of taking me by surprise.

The excessive mistrust revealed by this thoughtless conduct stifled the outpourings of a heart which, an instant before, had been longing for a friend to whom it might confide its troubles. All the same, I had no difficulty in hiding the unpleasant impression such a home-coming made on me. I had wished for this return, and had counted on it to protect me from danger. My husband was surprised to find that I had not yet gone to bed. I told him of my visit to Neuilly, of the sadness which had come over me, of my desire to go into the country, where I begged him to take me immediately. How easy it would have been for him to have discovered my secret!

Before his departure Louis had bought the two châteaux of Saint-Leu. One had belonged to the Duc d'Orléans, who had disposed of it before the Revolution. The other, older one, had been demolished, and the parks of the two domains thrown into one. The deep streams that flowed through these estates made them one of the loveliest spots in France. It was there we went to spend the last weeks before the date on which my child was to be born.

The beauties of nature have always produced an extraordinary effect on me. I did not recover my lost happiness at Saint-Leu, but, at least, the surroundings calmed

my nerves. Pleased with myself for having had the strength of mind to leave Paris, I enjoyed to the utmost the smiling countryside and the enchanting scenery. All nature reminded me that I still loved, but it likewise convinced me that it was possible to conquer this fatal inclination, for I had been able to escape from its toils at a moment when I felt them closing in on me.

When I was on the point of leaving for Saint-Leu, I received a letter from Monsieur de Flahaut. In order to write to me he signed his mother's name. He appeared deeply grieved at my departure. He awaited a line from me and in return was prepared to offer to place his life at my feet. I made no reply and stepped into my carriage.

My mother came back with the Emperor from Belgium, and we returned to Paris and occupied a new mansion in the Rue Cerutti, for my husband, since his appointment as Constable of France, could not receive in our little house in the Rue de la Victoire.* During our stay at Saint-Leu, Louis had rearranged my apartment. The height of the walls between our house and those of the neighbours had been increased, a sentry-box had been placed in the garden close to my window. My maids could no longer get to me except through the drawing-room, an innovation that aroused so much mirth among our servants that my husband was obliged to have the door replaced that connected my room with my maids' quarters. I made no comment whatever on these changes. His wishes were my wishes. Indeed, I felt that, now, the more he shut me in behind locks and bars, the greater service he was doing me. Not that it had ever occurred to me that I could forget my duty to the extent of receiving a man in my own room, but the more obstacles I saw about me the better I was pleased.

My attendants, who were appointed by the Emperor, consisted of Madame de Viry, lady-in-waiting, Madame de Villeneuve, Madame de Léry, Madame de Seyssel, Madame Mollien. I kept a post for Adèle Auguié. Madame de Boubers was governess of my children, Madame de Boucheporn and Madame de Mornay were under-governesses. I had Monsieur Turgot as equerry and the

* See Note p 273

Abbé Bertrand as chaplain, the latter had formerly been our teacher at Saint-Germain. Monsieur d'Osmond, Bishop of Nancy, was our almoner, and the principal officers attached to my husband were General Noguès, Monsieur de Caulaincourt, Monsieur de Broc, Monsieur d'Arjuzon and Monsieur de Villeneuve. A certain Monsieur de Ségura, whom he appointed steward, was supposed to enjoy my husband's confidence, no doubt because he ministered to his passion. He it was who organized the police service of the house, and in no country, I should say, was the detective service so well organized as in my home. This man was extremely afraid of me. I must frequently have been the object of his investigations, and the result was he did not dare to look me in the face, although I treated him exactly as I did everybody else. The other aides-de-camp had nothing remarkable about them, except their lack of physical attractiveness. My stay at Saint-Leu alone gave me the opportunity of becoming acquainted with all these gentlemen, none of whom ever set foot in my apartments. I was served entirely by my ladies-in-waiting, and my equerry appeared only on ceremonial occasions.

On October 11th, 1804, a few days after my arrival in Paris, I gave birth to a second son,* and in accordance with the established custom, the High Chancellor Cambacérès and all the other officials remained in the drawing room next to my bed-chamber. My mother had hastened from Saint-Cloud at the first symptoms, and did not leave me for an instant. My husband, I must confess, also showered the tenderest attentions on me. In such circumstances as these, his character seemed to change, but once the danger was past he became morose and suspicious as ever.

Public rejoicings, and profuse gifts to hospitals, marked the birth of a second heir to the throne, for both the Emperor and his brother Joseph being childless, my sons were destined to the succession. When my child was to be christened his father wrote in the baptismal register *Louis*, which was the name he wished his son to bear. The Emperor with his own hand struck this out, and in-
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One day, in the presence of the two other men, my husband looked at me and said, "Women all have the same motto, 'Short and sweet'" Overcome with indignation I rose and hurried to my room. Louis noticed my attitude and followed me.

"Ah," I exclaimed, "I do not know if my life will be short, but certainly no one could say that it was sweet"

This was the first complaint that I had ever dared utter. My husband began to laugh. He assured me that such a compliment was not intended for me and that I was mistaken in applying it to myself. On the other hand, all his actions betrayed the fact that this was his real opinion.

His severity towards me continued to increase. He had forbidden me to go anywhere, even to see my mother, without him. Six weeks had passed since my confinement and I was still unable to take food without fainting. Once my doctor came while I was unconscious. He attributed my swoon to the state of my nerves and gave orders that I was to be taken out into the fresh air immediately.

Madame de Boubers accompanied me to the Bois de Boulogne where I met the Princess Caroline with her children and their governess. I got into her carriage, and on his return home, my husband had not found me in the house. He did not know what to think, ordered a carriage, followed me and, unable to find me in the Bois de Boulogne, he became still more uneasy. Finally he met me duly escorted, as I have said, but he never forgave me for having gone out without telling him. This is another of his most serious charges against me. Perhaps my gentleness increased his defects. I have often thought so since, but at the time I believed that it was by this very gentleness that I should win him back. Besides, as I felt myself guilty of an affection that I was unable to stifle, I was the more ready to submit to all his injustices.

The question of a divorce between my mother and the Emperor was revived about this time. A council was called and the tenacity of the Emperor's brothers was such that he believed them inspired by personal animosity against my mother and the upshot was that

instead of heeding their advice, he formed the intention not only to make her Empress but also to have her crowned with him.

The Pope came to France to perform this ceremony and people talked about nothing but the preparations for so great a day. My husband went to Fontainebleau in order to be present at the interview between the Emperor and the Pope.* While in Paris, His Holiness was lodged in the Pavilion de Flore of the Louvre. I called on him accompanied by my husband and my son.* His venerable figure, head of a religion which teaches the beauties of suffering and forgiveness, moved me deeply. I believe had my husband not been with me I should have fallen on my knees imploring him to give me courage, just as though such a thing were in his power.

On December 2nd, 1804,* we went to the Tuileries and thence in great state to Notre-Dame. The immense crowd of people who had gathered to watch us pass, the customary cheering, the presence of the Head of the Church who had come from so far, the Italian cardinals, the army which had won so many victories, the Provincial presidents representing their Departments, the foreign princes, the brilliant Court, all contributed to make the spectacle one of the most imposing that can be imagined. My mother's grace and dignity won the admiration of all. There had been violent discussions as to who was to carry the Empress's train. The Emperor's sisters had refused to do so, but were forced to obey or else not appear at the ceremony. The Princess Joseph and I were the only ones to play our parts willingly. As she entered the church, my mother mislaid the ring given her by the Pope and which he was to bless. Her superstitious nature might have seen in this incident a sign of coming misfortune. My brother found the ring afterwards and gave it back to her. It is still in my possession.

A few days afterwards, the Emperor distributed his symbolic eagles to the troops on the Champ-de-Mars.* At a cabinet meeting the question had been discussed as to whether it would not be advisable to change the national colours, and do away with the tricolour which had aroused

* See Note p 274.

so much discord throughout France and which had been identified with so many crimes. But innumerable victories had, since then, made it a national, rather than a party, emblem and the Emperor was the first to admit that it had been the symbol of France's regeneration and that consequently it should naturally accompany his eagles, and make them feared abroad and loved at home.

The different ceremonies followed one another so rapidly that we did not have a moment to ourselves. In the morning a number of Frenchmen and foreigners were presented to us. My husband, as Constable of France, received a number of generals and colonels to dine every day. We also invited all the Presidents of the French Cantons. By a strange chance, a balloon that had gone astray during one of the *fêtes* fell near Rome and brought the news of the coronation twenty-four hours after it had taken place.

My eldest child had been baptized by Cardinal Capara. The Emperor wished to have the one who had just been born baptized by the Pope. The ceremony took place at Saint-Cloud.* It was the first time that the Pope officiated at this rite. Consequently the greatest pomp accompanied it. My son cried a great deal and that was the only thing I noticed, but this mark of the Emperor's favour affected Caroline painfully. She had just given birth to a daughter and had hoped to have her child baptized at the same time as mine. I should have been glad on her account, but the Emperor would not hear of it and naturally she was rather jealous of me.

These festivities which the Emperor was obliged to attend had taken his mind a little off public affairs. At least he seemed more willing to appear in society and to enjoy it. He had become courtly in his manners, spoke more frequently to the ladies, but only in order that he might the more easily converse with the only one of them who appeared really to interest him.

Madame Duchâtel was about the average height, with a good figure. Her features were animated and intelligent, her eyes large and deep blue with a charming expression.

She had a rather long and very pointed nose, a large mouth revealing the most beautiful teeth in the world, and a complexion that was dull in the daytime but dazzling in the evening. Such was the woman who disturbed my mother's peace of mind. Madame Duchâtel had just been appointed lady-in-waiting at the Palace. When she was at a ball, Prince Murat never left her side but his wife did not seem disturbed. My brother told me one day that the Emperor was in love with this lady. Duroc had told him that Napoleon was not attending to affairs of state and talked about her all the time. He added that Murat's constant attendance on her was not on his own behalf. We feared, both of us, that the Empress might notice what was going on. Had she done so, it would have been such a cruel blow that we promised one another to unite our efforts to avert it.

The wife of Marshal Ney, who had always been a close friend of mine, served as lady-in-waiting with Madame Duchâtel. She had noticed to whom the Emperor addressed most of his remarks, and to whom he was most attentive, but when my mother began to show uneasiness she feared that suspicion might fall upon her. I begged her, if the Empress accused her unjustly, to make no explanation because it would be easy to undeceive my mother later, whereas if she came to suspect her who was really loved, there could no longer be any doubt nor any happiness for the Empress.

On account of her affection for me, my friend agreed to this but always remained prepared to justify herself and declare the truth. As for my mother, she saw plainly enough that someone was stealing her husband's affection from her, and she became the prey of the gloomiest thoughts and so sad that I did not know what to do to console her. I confided to Louis the cause of her grief, and begged him to allow me to visit the Empress more frequently. He acceded to my request very grudgingly. I was the daily witness of painful scenes, for my mother's reproaches wearied Napoleon. He lost his temper. She wept to her ladies, who consoled her and told everybody the reason for her tears. The Emperor was represented as a

dangerous, immoral man and when these reports came back to him his anger burst forth anew

In the meantime, my mother's grief, and the change in her health, made me so anxious that I decided to speak of it to Murat "You are attached to the Emperor," I said to him, "so you ought to care about the happiness of his home life. Instead of that you are perhaps the cause that it no longer exists. By repeating remarks you hear made in the palace you irritate him. His nervousness leads to renewed scenes and the peace of this union which up to this time has been so close and happy is destroyed."

Murat put up a poor defence, only protesting that his devotion to the Emperor was boundless, and next day, while they were out hunting, he repeated our conversation to my stepfather, no doubt giving it the turn he wished.

A Court was held that same evening. The Emperor came in, looked at me sternly, pretended to speak to the two ladies who were beside me, and passed me by without a word or even a bow. At the end of the evening he could no longer contain himself. Whenever he was angry with anyone, he was unable to conceal it. He called me to him and the following conversation took place, everybody standing and retiring to a distance until it should be at an end. "So you, too, Madame, are against me?"—"I, sire? I could never be against you."—"Oh! it's plain enough! It is your mother's doing!"—"I cannot separate you from her in the happiness I wish her!"—"But you complain of the way I treat her!"—"Sire, what I said has not been repeated correctly. You are free to act as you choose, but the scenes I witness between you and my mother make you both wretched, and those who provoke them want to make themselves of importance but are not sincerely attached to either of you!"—"Why should I not have friends who tell me the truth?"—"Real friends do not try to increase friction between a married couple!"—"But your mother's jealousy makes me look ridiculous to everyone. All sorts of stupid remarks are made about me. Don't you think I know about them? She is to blame."—"No, Sire, those of

whom I am complaining are to be blamed for it. If they tried to calm you instead of arousing your anger, you would be more considerate of my mother's feelings. How can you expect her to have more self-control than you have yourself? She suffers and she complains. That is natural enough. If those whom you consider your friends did not repeat her complaints to you or if you could control yourself enough not to show her your displeasure, I am sure you would again be happy together. But, I repeat, do not expect more patience from her than you have yourself."—"You are right," said the Emperor, suddenly becoming more gentle, "I see that if I am great in great things, I am petty in small ones." With these words he left me.

Several days later he spoke about me to several persons, and one of his remarks was so gratifying that I must record it. Here is the phrase as it was repeated to me :—"Hortense reasons so clearly that one might think she felt nothing. But when you know her, you realize that it is her feeling that makes her reason so well."

On another occasion, speaking to me of my married life, he said laughingly, "Louis would have been very happy with the Empress. One would have kept guard over the window and the other over the door." Then he added seriously, "For that matter I know how you behave and I assure you you are not only one of the women but one of the persons I esteem most." Such eulogy from a man so pre-eminent and one who praised so rarely, consoled me for the injustice of others, and I have often recalled it with pride so as to suffer less from the censure with which I have been overwhelmed.

Although not so stormy as mine, the Empress's married life was not much happier. She began to guess who was occupying her husband's mind, and soon doubt became impossible. One evening at Malmaison, she had complained of the Emperor's mood to the two ladies in attendance, who were Madame Ney and Madame Duchâtel, and next morning she said, looking at them severely, "Ladies, it is most surprising that the Emperor repeated to me this morning a remark confided only

to you last night " Madame Duchâtel changed colour, and no doubt was left to the Empress Her grief was so violent that she persuaded the Emperor to break off his liaison, and this rupture was a sacrifice, for Duroc told my brother and me that this love affair had a great hold on the Emperor

Accustomed as he was to see everything bow before his will, resistance increased his desire, but too much master of himself to be dominated by his feelings, and too vigorous in his judgment of morals to be able to admit his liaison publicly, he did not hesitate to put a stop to an affair which was already a difficulty to him In order to be able to see Madame Duchâtel without rousing the suspicions of her husband, the Emperor had on several evenings gone out on foot alone with Duroc. Once when he was walking with her on Murat's estate at Villiers, they heard a noise Afraid of being surprised, he jumped over a high wall at the risk of injuring himself Duroc, who was cooler, dared not imitate him and was constantly terrified to see the risks he ran He was delighted when the liaison came to an end I heard through Caroline that the Emperor sent Madame Duchâtel his portrait set in magnificent diamonds She kept the portrait but returned the diamonds, offended. Caroline told me, too, that the Emperor had asked her, at a time when Madame Duchâtel was ill, to get back the letters he had written her They were supposed to be extremely tender Madame Duchâtel always refused to return them, but I do not know whether they are still in her possession

People talked a great deal about the masked balls at the Opera. "What," said the Emperor to me, "your husband has never taken you in a box to look on at one of these spectacles? He really is too strict You must go some night with your mother," and, in truth, one evening after a large reception, the Empress, whom I was in the habit of escorting back to her apartment, invited me to accompany her to the ball I should have liked to ask my husband's permission Although he had hardly spoken a word to me for a long time I felt that perhaps

for the first time he would have a reason to complain of my conduct. But I was unable to reach him as he had already left the palace. Caulaincourt, who was now Duc de Vicenza, and Monsieur de Bausset had been appointed to accompany us, and I took Madame de Boubers's arm. The sight of the masks amused me, but as no one accosted me, I was unable to understand in what the pleasure of these balls consisted, and we were about to return to our carriages after we had twice walked around the ballroom when a man in a mask stopped us and wished us to turn back with him.

"What," he exclaimed, "you are allowed an amusement which you so rarely have an opportunity to enjoy and this all the use you can make of it! You are nothing but a little goose!"

The masked man frightened me. We returned to the Tuileries where my mother was much troubled not to find the Emperor. A moment later he appeared wearing a domino and told us that he was the masked man, who had amused himself by frightening us, but that our hasty return had spoiled his plans. When I reached home I told my husband the whole adventure, but he made no comment. His displeasure was no longer expressed by reproaches as it had been when we were newly married. He now showed it by a glacial silence.

A few months before the Emperor's departure for Italy a page came one morning to say that the Emperor wished to see us both. As we came in he announced that he would take no refusal. His policy made it imperative that he adopt our elder son whom he would crown King of Italy. My husband replied that he would never consent to his son holding a rank higher than his own.* The Emperor stormed at first, then became quieter, tried to persuade my husband that the child would remain in France until he came of age, that he would have two establishments, one French, the other Italian: that, moreover, it was the only means of avoiding war with Austria and keeping Italy. But my husband remained firm.

Then the Emperor, giving way to his anger, complained that it was bitter to have a family that bore so little of

* See Note p 274

the burden and assisted him so little in his labours. Every day he was made to feel his misfortune in being childless. His brothers were of no assistance to him and he might as well have placed this new crown on his own head, indeed, were it not that he feared such an action might lead to war, he would have already done so, and that he would be happier if he had nothing to hope nor expect from any of them. His arguments were as fruitless as his anger and he dismissed us without having obtained anything. During the entire conversation I had not said a word. What could I have said? In the end it was always my poor mother who had to suffer for these scenes. The Emperor's constantly impatient manner seemed to reproach her with the misfortune of their childlessness. Yet at times he was uncertain as to whether this was entirely her fault. The idea occurred to him to employ a singular stratagem to settle these doubts one way or another. He confided it to Murat and this is what took place.

Princess Caroline had as her protégée a young woman named *Éléonore La Plaigne** who had been brought up at our school at Saint-Germain. She was very beautiful but not at all clever and her family was such that Madame Campan allowed her to remain at school only on condition that she should not leave except to get married. One day her father and mother brought her as a fiancé an officer who had settled at Saint Germain. The wedding took place three days later. After the wedding the husband disappeared, carrying off with him all his wife's belongings. Touched by the girl's sad fate, Madame Campan, who could not take her back as a pupil and feared that, left to herself, she might succumb to temptation, interested Princess Caroline in the case. It was arranged that the young woman should go and live some distance from Paris until her marriage could be annulled, and that, when this had taken place, she should receive a dowry, and, it was hoped, remarry under better conditions. A year passed and suddenly she was found living alone in a little villa at Neuilly, and on one occasion when the Emperor lunched with Prince Murat, she it was who announced the arrival

of the guests. From that moment she vanished and everyone explained her disappearance as he pleased. People said that the Emperor occasionally went to see her, riding over from Saint-Cloud. During the war with Prussia, she gave birth to a son* whom Princess Caroline took care of. The Emperor saw her only once after his return, and, naturally suspicious of women, he wrung from her the confession that during her solitude at Neuilly she had often received Murat and had not been indifferent to him. From that time he was always in doubt as to whether he was really the father of the child in spite of the assurances that everyone gave him.*

To return to my narrative. The Emperor was so indignant at his brothers' refusal to fall in with his plans—for Joseph, too, refused anything that would take him away from Paris—that he published in the *Moniteur* the beautiful letter about Eugène which shows all his love and esteem for my brother as clearly as his resentment towards his brothers. Eugène was made Vice-Chancellor of State, one of the highest dignitaries of the empire. When my brother received the news of this appointment he was at the head of his regiment, leading his men into Italy. The Emperor and Empress arrived there not long afterwards and had themselves crowned King and Queen of Italy.* The Emperor had asked us to accompany him, but my husband refused, and we went instead to Saint-Leu.

I had had occasion to meet Monsieur de Flahaut again at all the festivities that were held in connection with the coronation of the Emperor in Paris. Each time I felt ill at ease. I took the greatest care to avoid him and one day while we were driving and he came up to the carriage to speak to me, I ordered the coachman to drive on, so great was my fear of hearing his voice. He was so much upset by this conduct that his mother called on me to complain about it. I replied that I had no fault to find with her son, and that my behaviour had been entirely unconscious. When I examined my own conscience I decided that to be on bad terms with Monsieur de Flahaut was really to be on too good terms. I had thought that all my efforts had cured me. To my sorrow I discovered

* See Note p. 274.

by the pain I felt at seeing him that such was not the case. I vowed that I would behave as naturally towards him as towards anyone else. At the first ball at which we met I spoke to him and my voice broke. Nevertheless, I was pleased to have had even so much self-control. At the second ball I had him invited to dance with me. While we waltzed he told me how much my coquetry had wounded him. I was shocked to hear myself accused of the fault I most despised. "Me a coquette?" I exclaimed — "Yes. For at first, you showed me goodwill and I asked nothing more. Your kindness sufficed to make me happy and suddenly it seems to have turned to hatred." I felt I had given him grounds for judging me thus. But who can fathom the strangeness of the human heart? I did not wish to be loved. I fled from anything that faintly resembled love and yet, after all my struggles and suffering, the mere accusation of a hateful fault hurt me so deeply that, forgetting the ball, my rank, and the many eyes that were fixed upon me, I could not restrain my tears. Not without dismay did I feel them flow. What could I say to those who might have noticed them? As for Monsieur de Flahaut he was even more moved than I was myself. In a single instant he learned more than I should ever have dared to tell him.

"Once you cared for me a little. Why did you not let me know? You would have saved me much suffering! And now, although I still love you and you alone, I belong to someone!" — "No, no, I do not love you," I exclaimed. "Although I might possibly have feared to do so at one time, all that is past, I assure you!" — "Then, at least, let us be friends," said he. "Your friendship will console me for all I have lost."

I gave him my promise. We separated.

This conversation calmed me. I had nothing to fear from a man who had confessed to me that he had a *fiancée* elsewhere. This proof of his confidence in my discretion sufficed to convince me of Monsieur de Flahaut's respect and admiration. I could ask no more, yet how fierce are the storms roused by the feelings we seek to subdue in our hearts! No one was aware of my trouble. I alone

knew of it, but the Emperor, struck by the change in my looks, said to my mother, "Hortense has lost her pink cheeks. Her husband does not make her happy, and one of these days there will be difficult times. If she ever falls in love, it will be deeply; and love makes one commit all sorts of follies."—"Ah," replied my mother, "but Hortense is so sensible."—"True enough, but passion is a great force."—"She is so gentle, so collected, she never acts in a hasty, impetuous manner."—"Don't rely upon that. Look at the way she walks.* Listen to what she says. Everything about her reveals a highly strung nature. Besides, is she not your daughter?" When my mother told me this I cast my eyes down. My only reply was a smile, my only hope to put the Emperor in the wrong.

At Saint-Leu, deprived of happiness and health, my strength failed rapidly and my greatest trouble was that no one seemed to care for my sorrow. My mother, my brother were far away. Only Adèle realized my misfortune and sympathized with me. I spent all my time taking care of my children and painting.* My husband, irritated at seeing me always at work and apparently calm and resigned, said to me, "You seem to be killing time waiting for the coming of happier days." This latter phrase was apparently intended as an allusion to his own poor health. What could I answer? I grew weaker, I made no effort to regain my strength and in a short time should have pined away had not a violent shock saved me.

I received a letter from Eugène announcing his appointment as Viceroy of Italy† and expressing his grief at being separated from his family and his country. This letter gave me a terrible blow. My unhappiness had made my brother's love more necessary than ever to me. He alone really knew and esteemed me. With him away I should remain utterly exposed to my husband's injustice without a friend to understand or protect me. It was true that Eugène had no idea of what I was enduring. I held it my duty to hide my sufferings even from his eyes, but if he were near me I could at any moment draw

* See Note p 274.

† See Note p 275

upon the wealth of his sympathy. News of his death could scarcely have hurt me more than did this message that we were to be separated indefinitely. My tears, which for long had refused me their comfort, welled up and flowed abundantly. They saved my life, for from that day I began again to take a little food. Far from sharing my grief Louis laughed at my tears, and this was one of the most cruel wounds that he inflicted on me.

From Monsieur de Flahaut, on the other hand, I received a letter full of sympathy and understanding. He realized how deeply I was affected by this separation from a brother I adored. He shared my grief, indeed this separation meant for him, too, the absence of a beloved friend. How easy it is to touch a broken heart! I felt as though the person who so well understood me were the brother I had lost. Filled with this consoling thought I saw no reason to leave his letter unanswered. This was the first time that I had written to him. The knowledge of his entire confidence and friendship won a favour which love would never have obtained from me.

My husband was ordered to take the baths at Saint Amand. We went there, leaving our younger son with Madame de Boubers and only taking the elder boy with us, accompanied by his under-governess, Adèle and Mademoiselle Cochelet. We stopped at Mortefontaine to visit Prince Joseph. I had had a letter written to Madame Campan to give her news of my health. My footman took the letter and gave it to my husband, who was discovered by my ladies-in-waiting reading it in the park. On our arrival at Saint-Amand I saw this same footman, who had married one of my maids, ransacking my private papers. Seeing that he was discovered he threw himself at my feet, told me I had his life in my hands but that he was acting under the orders of his master who, he confessed, had promised him a hundred louis if he could find out anything against me. I was so astonished and ashamed that my husband should have stooped so low that I pitied him for being the victim of such an all-devouring passion, even more than I pitied myself. I told the servant that, as he only obeyed the Prince, he might

continue his search, I should not pay the smallest attention. Indeed, how could I care about my husband's respect for me, that respect which I had valued so highly in the past; when I saw all his weaknesses? A longer experience of life has made me more indulgent by teaching me how passion can distort even the most noble characters. But in those days I could forgive Louis only because he was my husband and I felt it my duty to do so. At last I found an excuse for him in his bad health, but, as I was satisfied with my conduct, I became less and less anxious about his approval; for almost every day he did something which obliged me to consider his esteem as having less and less value.

On one occasion I found a secretary opening my private letters which were all from either my mother or my brother. Another day I was walking arm in arm with Adèle, who was showing me a letter from a Polish girl, Christine Kosanska, our fellow-pupil at Saint-Germain. My son, my other ladies-in-waiting, my carriage and my servants were all close at hand. My husband came up behind us, snatched away the letter and read it eagerly hoping to find in it some ground for his jealousy. Ashamed at his mistake he said:—"You are sharp, ladies, and think to put me off the track, but I have just seen two men on horseback ride away from here."

Although afterwards he often referred to this story, we thought at the time that he was joking. Well! While we were in Holland he told the tale to Madame de Broc before his entire Court and his ministers of state, adding: "They thought I was taking my bath. I surprised these two ladies making believe to read a letter from a schoolgirl, and I saw two men dash off at a gallop through the wood. I spoke to them about it, they pretended to be surprised. The next day I sent to Valenciennes and learned that, as a matter of fact, two young men did arrive from Paris and left again the same day." I ask every unprejudiced person whether anyone could believe that a husband would amuse himself by inventing such stories about his wife, stories without one word of

truth in them. Perhaps by dint of repeating them he at last came to think them true.

The Emperor had returned from Italy.* The magnificent ceremony at which he distributed the Crosses of the Legion of Honour and which I had witnessed, had been held before his departure.* He went to Boulogne to hold a second similar ceremony on his feast-day in the presence of his assembled army. He had appointed my husband general in the Reserve Corps and sent him a special message that he and I should come to the Camp of Boulogne and bring our son Napoleon. My husband would not go himself, but did not venture to refuse for me and my son. He gave me leave for eight days after much hesitation and after keeping me in suspense till the last moment. I was delighted with the idea of having an opportunity of seeing those wonderful camps about which everyone was talking, and I must confess that, like a school-girl out of sight of a stern teacher, I could breathe more freely when I was away from my husband.

The Emperor was living at a little country seat near Boulogne known as "*Le Pont-de-Brigues*." Caroline and Murat occupied another estate close by. I lived with them and we dined every day with the Emperor.

For the past two years our troops had been concentrated opposite England and everyone expected an invasion. The camps which surrounded Boulogne were placed beside the sea and looked like a city with long straight streets. Each hut had a little garden, flowers and birds. Near the Tour d'Ordre stood the hut intended for the Emperor, with General Berthier's next to it. All the flat bottomed boats were lying in the different harbours waiting for the starting signal. England could be seen in the far distance. Her noble ships, cruising before the coast, seemed to form an unbreakable barrier. The impression evoked by this spectacle gave an idea of grandeur unknown till then. Everything stirred the imagination. This immense sea was about to become a battlefield and perhaps swallow up the flower of two great nations. Our troops, proud of never having known defeat, restless after two years of inactivity, aflame with bravery and

valour, imagined that they were already landing on the opposite shores. Their faith and their intrepidity gave one hope of success, but suddenly the sight of so many obstacles and the fear of so many dangers disturbed this hope and clutched at the heart with involuntary terror. Still, the preparations were complete, and the only thing lacking to this expedition was a favourable wind.

Of all the attentions a woman can receive, those which soldiers offer her are most acceptable, for they have a knightly quality about them which is particularly flattering. Never had there been, I believe, a more brilliant and imposing gathering of distinguished soldiers than that at which I found myself. Consequently this was the one time that they really made an impression on me.

The Emperor had appointed his equerry, General Defrance, as my escort. Whenever I visited a camp it would be turned out for me and its troops manœuvre before me. I asked for the pardon of some officers who had been punished for breaches of discipline and I was received with the greatest enthusiasm. Staff officers on horseback accompanied my carriage, and wherever I went strains of military music announced my arrival. For the first time in my life I saw, at one of the reviews, a funeral urn worn on a bandolier by a soldier in one of the grenadier regiments. I was told that the Emperor, in order to honour the memory of a particularly brave soldier named La Tour d'Auvergne, had entrusted his heart in a lead casket to the keeping of the oldest soldier of his regiment. At the roll-call the hero's name was called as though he were present and the bearer of the casket replied: "Killed on the Field of Honour."

One day a luncheon was given for me at the Camp d'Ambleteuse. I wished to go there by sea in spite of the unfavourable wind. The admiral took me. I saw the English vessels quite close at hand. The Dutch, commanded by Admiral Verhuell, received me with loud cheers, but had no more idea than I that a year later I should be their queen. Another time the Emperor played at war. The English, uneasy at seeing so many troops massed together, came in close

to shore. They fired several shots, and the Emperor, who was always at the head of the French troops when they were in action, found himself between two fires. As we had followed him we were obliged to remain. My son was not the least frightened and his uncle was delighted with him. But the generals trembled at seeing the Emperor expose himself thus. The ram rod of a clumsy soldier might have proved as fatal as an enemy bullet.

One thing impressed me particularly in the midst of this martial scene—these heroic troops, whose courage terrified the enemy when they went into battle, were, when in camp, as easy to control as a crowd of children, and like them they were amused by any little thing—a bird, a flower. The dashing warrior had been replaced by the shy schoolboy.

During the luncheon given me at Ambleteuse by Marshal Davoust in his tent, some grenadiers who had learned appropriate verses for the occasion came and sang them while we were at table. They were as timid as young girls. I was the more surprised at their awkward air and embarrassed attitude when singing about the invasion of England for, if I remember correctly, each verse ended with the phrase—

*"Que traverser le détroit
Ce n'était pas la mer à boire !*

Was a serious attack on England ever really intended to take place? or did the Emperor use these immense preparations to distract public attention from other things and concentrate it on that one point? I cannot say. This again is one of the questions which I will not attempt to answer. Here, as elsewhere in these Memoirs, I will confine myself to telling what I saw.

The wife of Marshal Ney gave a brilliant reception for me at Montreuil,* where her husband was in command. The morning was spent in watching the evolutions of the troops, who manœuvred for my especial benefit. In the evening a ball took place which was suddenly interrupted by the news that the Emperor had just embarked.

Everyone was excited and in despair at being at a dance while the crossing into England was taking place. A host of young officers who were present dashed off along the highway to Boulogne. I followed them at full speed, always accompanied by General DeFrance, who was consumed with impatience to rejoin the Emperor. I myself felt overcome with an inexpressible emotion at the idea that so momentous an event was taking place before my eyes. I already imagined that, as I stood at the Tour d'Odre, I was witnessing the naval battle and seeing our vessels plunge into the watery deep. I trembled at the thought. At last we reached our destination. I asked for the Emperor and learned that he had superintended the embarkation of all the troops during the night, but that he had just returned to the house.* I did not see him until dinner-time, when he questioned Prince Joseph, who was then in command of a regiment, as to his impression of the embarkation, the manner in which it had been carried out and the time it had taken. Joseph said that everyone believed that it was a real departure and that the soldiers, believing it, had sold their watches. The Emperor also asked very often whether the semaphore had signalled the approach of the French squadron which carried his aide-de-camp, Lauriston. He seemed quite as though he were only waiting for the arrival of this squadron and a favourable wind to give orders for the departure of the flotilla of transports.

The eight days' leave of absence granted by my husband were almost over. I was too scrupulous to exceed them by a single day, but the Emperor, who wished me to witness an engagement between his ships and the English vessels, was anxious for me to stay on. I resisted so energetically that he said crossly: "Very well, then, madam, go, since you fear to vex your husband more than to displease me."

And he left me abruptly. I did not know what to do. Such a farewell was distressing, and Joseph, who was present, told me that I could not leave the Emperor so annoyed. It was the first time he had ever been angry with me and I was much concerned over it. I decided to remain a day longer. When he saw me the next morning the

* See Note p 275

Emperor, pleased by my submission, spoke to me with a truly fatherly kindness, saying "You are too afraid of your husband. He is unreasonable in his demands only because you allow him to take an unfair advantage of you. A good woman has always the rights which her virtue confers on her," and he did not seek to detain me longer.

I went through Dunkirk and Calais. In every place the troops were marching past and I left this brilliant army not only with regret, but with grief when I thought that in a few days' time it might be exposed to the greatest dangers.

Whenever I had driven out I had caught sight of Monsieur de Flahaut accompanying my carriage with many other officers, and of an evening, too, at Caroline's, we had sung together, but he had never been able to speak to me, although I was well aware that he wished to do so.

I returned to Saint-Amand* delighted with my journey and full of the sights I had beheld. I described them in detail to my husband. He listened coldly and was not in the least grateful to me for having come home instead of witnessing the naval combat. The more enthusiastic I became in my narrative the more annoyed he seemed.

We were expecting daily to receive news of the crossing of the Channel when suddenly all the troops came back through the place where we were living, hurrying by forced marches to the Rhine.

Austria had broken the peace. We went back to Paris to see the Emperor before his departure for Germany*. He took Murat with him and appointed my husband governor of Paris in his stead*. This was a new grievance for Louis, who said, "He need not expect that I shall agree to all that Murat did, but perhaps my brother wants me to make myself unpopular and to oblige me to take severe measures as in the days of the Duc d'Enghien." — When you are asked to do things repugnant to your sense of honour," I replied, "it will be time to refuse, but as things are now how can you decline to help your

brother ? On whom can he rely if not on you ? ” — “ My health no longer allows me to make myself useful. It is in the army that I could have served him, but I am not well enough to follow him.”

All the same he accepted, for in spite of all his criticisms he was dominated by his brother's will. Brought up by him (perhaps with too much severity), Louis had kept a sort of fear which prevented him from opposing the Emperor to his face, and had contracted the habit of self-distrust, which made him unable to express his will, though this was very decided. So that his character, though strongly marked, lacked the openness that would have helped him to hold his ground. Still, when once, willy-nilly, he did accept a post he filled it as well as anybody else, or even better. Indeed, sometimes he came to like his new duties. His greatest handicap was that he took up each new thing reluctantly and had the preconceived idea that every man's hand was against him.

The Emperor's genius showed itself in the smallest as well as in the greatest matters. My husband sometimes repeated to me orders that he had given which showed his prodigious memory. If he asked for reinforcements he would himself indicate the number of officers and men available as well as the different dépôts in which they were stationed. If he met isolated soldiers belonging to different divisions on their way to join the regiments which were marching towards the Rhine he knew exactly where each regiment ought to be on a given day and indicated their eventual destination and how to reach it.

While I was at Boulogne my mother had been taking the waters at Plombières. At the outbreak of war she went to Strasbourg to be in close touch with the Emperor. Before she left she told me that the police had found out my husband's spying and that the Emperor had spoken to him very severely about it. I have already referred to it on different occasions, but a curious fact, of which I knew nothing at the time, was that five or six young men in Paris were constantly followed in order to discover which one of them was my lover ! They were selected

among those with whom I danced the most often, as I never received any man at home. The spies had not been able to discover a single thing! What evidence could they have found against me? But my name must have been bandied even in taverns, and was it likely to be respected when my own husband did not respect it?

I tried to find something to divert my thoughts and occupied myself with those who were in misfortune. I took advantage of my husband's position to have many poor people admitted to the various hospitals. I accepted the post of president of the *Asile de la Providence*, I made myself responsible for several beds at the almshouses at Sainte-Périne, I attended the meetings of the *Société Maternelle* presided over by Madame de Pastoret.

But if in these activities I found relief from my domestic troubles, nothing could lessen the keen anxiety caused by public events. War had begun. Not a day passed without the arrival of a messenger bringing news of some brilliant victory. The idea of the dangers which threatened the person of whom I thought all too often showed me how much I cared for him and dimmed my joy. When a despatch arrived I trembled lest it should contain his name*. One day he was mentioned for distinguished conduct, another time for having received a wound. Fortunately I was alone when I received the news. My emotion was too acute for anyone to suppose that it was inspired by friendship. When I saw the woman whom I believed to love him calmer than I was myself, I was indignant with her: when I saw her sad and downcast I felt attracted to her, and forgave her the moments of anguish I had so often passed because of her.

Victory had already led our army up to the very gates of Vienna when Prussia assumed a hostile attitude towards us. My husband received orders to go to Nimeguen to take command of an army of observation. His departure moved me,* for after all, he was the father of my children. How could I fail to forgive him and wish him god-speed? He was about to be in danger. I often received letters from him. War did not break out in that quarter and he travelled about Holland, where

* See Note p. 275.

he received the most flattering reception. But in spite of instructions to remain at his post he hurried home.

My mother sent me the letters she received from the Emperor. They were very laconic but often foretold events and the successes of his troops. The Emperor wrote to me once from Vienna saying that he expected my son to prove worthy of his lofty destiny. After the battle of Austerlitz he asked my husband to have the little boy sent him so that he could show him to the victorious army, but the request was refused.

About this time the Emperor created the kingdoms of Bavaria and Wurtemberg and the Grand Duchies of Baden, Hesse-Darmstadt, Nassau and Berg. . . . On his return to Munich he decided to marry my brother to the Princess Augusta of Bavaria, daughter of the King.* My mother had left Strasbourg and joined him in Munich. She wished me to meet her there. My husband would not allow me, and this refusal caused me one of the greatest disappointments of my life.

Eugène was ordered to Munich without suspecting why he was summoned there. A few days later he was adopted by the Emperor as his son* and married by the Prince-Primate to a most lovely and virtuous Princess. On this occasion the Emperor wrote me a letter containing the following flattering sentence : " The Princess of Bavaria is full of good qualities, and in her you will have a sister worthy of you in every way." As a consequence of this marriage he had to face several family quarrels. Murat and his wife were unwilling to attend the wedding. The husband could not admit that after his brilliant campaign a younger man should take precedence over him and he broke his sword on hearing the news that the Emperor had adopted Eugène, whose appointment as Viceroy of Italy had already angered him greatly. Caroline was indignant at the thought of an advantageous alliance for a family which she did not consider related to her. On her return she spoke to me frankly and admitted that, at Munich, she had advised the Emperor to obtain a divorce in order to marry the Princess Augusta himself. But she was obliged to obey her brother's

* See Note p. 275

commands and did so with the worst grace in the world.

The Bonaparte family soon had another mortification. My cousin, Stéphanie de Beauharnais, daughter of the Count de Beauharnais, had lost her mother very young. She had been educated at Saint-Germain under my mother's care, and now, at fifteen, she possessed all the winsomeness and grace natural to that age. The Emperor took her from school, adopted her as his daughter, and married her to the Hereditary Grand Duke of Baden. Caroline was so vexed by this social advancement that at Court receptions, when my cousin's new rank placed them side by side, the Princess Murat turned her back and avoided speaking a word to the new Grand Duchess.

At that time the foreign sovereigns were so eager to secure an alliance with the Emperor that they would have accepted a relative even of the thirtieth degree. As long as the Emperor had adopted such a relative, that adoption sufficed.

The Court of Wurtemberg made some advances in view of a marriage between the Crown Prince and Mademoiselle Stéphanie Tascher, a cousin of my mother, but the Emperor refused as the young girl had displeased him. While she was staying with my mother Stéphanie had lost her head over General R. * A marriage between them was entirely out of the question. My mother was scandalized and said to her constantly, "How could you choose a man without education or any sort of distinction except that of being a good soldier?" But these reproaches produced the exactly opposite effect, for the more people seek to belittle the object of our choice, the more our pride joins our love in our attachment to him. The Emperor, seeing that the Empress was really angry with her cousin, and believing me to be calmer, asked me to speak to Stéphanie and to tell her that he would never consent to such a marriage. I thought that the best means of changing her mind would be to make an appeal to her heart. After emphasizing the inflexible refusal of the Emperor and the Empress, I showed how her stubbornness would bring misfortune on the man she loved, that she would

be responsible for his fall from favour and that in consequence she, too, would be unhappy. I added some praise of General R. . . . and Stéphanie was impressed by my arguments. I had succeeded. She gave up all ideas of this union, returned to Madame Campan's school, and a year later became the wife of the Duc d'Arenberg.

As for the marriage of Stéphanie de Beauharnais, it was celebrated with truly royal pomp. Cardinal Capara, Papal Nuncio, pronounced the nuptial benediction and there were very magnificent functions. At one of the Court balls Caroline and I each had a quadrille. My partner was the Crown Prince of Bavaria, who was spending some time in Paris. He was not attractive in appearance, almost deaf, and stuttered. He was deeply marked with small-pox, too, but he was witty, and that he was Eugène's brother-in-law was sufficient recommendation for me. Consequently I was attentive to him with the keenest interest. I lent him my diamonds, arranging them myself upon his hat. I did my best to make him appear to advantage and my quadrille was more admired than Caroline's, who was again rather jealous over this trifling success.

The Princess Pauline, another sister of the Emperor, had accompanied her husband to Santo-Domingo, where he had died. She was now remarried to Prince Borghèse, who had not much mind but a handsome face and a great fortune in Rome. Pauline's bad health obliged her to take constant care of herself. She had the reputation, which she well deserved and of which she was very proud, of being the prettiest woman in France, and perhaps even in Europe.

The eldest sister, the Princess Elise, had been made Princess of Lucca. She was a woman of character with plenty of brains, and later, when she became Grand Duchess of Tuscany, she governed her realm as ably as a clever man would have done ; not that she had been particularly well educated, although she was brought up at Saint-Cyr. But her good natural parts replaced book-learning.

All the members of the Emperor's family were much attached to one another so long as no question of ambition was involved. In that case all the others made com-

cause against the luckiest, but peace was soon re-established between them

On the day that we learned of Elise's nomination to the Principality of Lucca, my husband and I called on all his sisters. We began with Caroline, who with a forced laugh said to us "Well! so here is Elise, a Sovereign Princess! She is to have an army of four men and a corporal. But it is a fine thing!" But vexation showed through her flippancy.

As for Princess Borghèse, she made no attempt to hide her feelings. "My brother," she said, "cares only for Elise and forgets all the rest of us. Caroline, who has children and a distinguished husband, deserves better treatment and more independence. As far as I am concerned I don't ask for anything, I am an invalid, but it is not fair towards Caroline." I saw that she was excited and to calm her I said "Sister, the Emperor loves you all equally. Elise is the eldest. He begins with her. Later he will doubtless provide for you and for Caroline. He cannot do everything at once." I thought this reason the best to put forward and my husband actually supported me, but she exclaimed hotly: "You are in no position to criticize us, madam, you who get everything you want." I was dumbfounded. She had no idea of how mistaken she was. Little did she guess how far I was from getting everything I wanted, though, to be sure, what I wanted was not principalities. I left her without saying another word. My husband kissed her, saying, as he did so "Pauline, you are not well," and we left the house.

Of all the Emperor's sisters, Caroline, who had been for some time with me at Saint-Germain, was the only one with whom I was intimate. Nor did I count very much upon her friendship. The petty vexations I had to suffer from this family proved that they did not like me. Nor were my mother and brother more popular with them. I consoled myself with the thought that I had nothing with which to reproach myself.

The Emperor went to spend a few days at Gisors* the handsome estate which Marshal Bessières had bought

* See Note p. 275.

from Monsieur Auguié. I was glad to revisit the spot where some of the happiest hours of my youth had been spent, and my husband had not ventured to refuse the Emperor's invitation for us both. I had gone with the Princess of Baden, her husband, and the Prince of Bavaria. The Emperor spent his days hunting and retired early.

We took tea in the evening with the Princess of Baden. One day the idea of playing a trick on the Prince of Bavaria occurred to us. We put a wig on a doll, dressed it in a pretty nightcap and short nightgown and put it in his bed. We then composed a letter supposed to be from a lady who did not sign her name but who was most anxious to see him and who was awaiting him in his apartment. A servant delivered him the note while we were all together. The Prince read it with an interest he was unable to conceal, took another letter from his pocket and compared the two. He stepped over to me and enquired anxiously: "Do you think the handwriting is the same?" I assured him that it was evident the two letters had been written by the same person, the only difference being that one had been composed carefully, whereas the other had been dashed off hurriedly. He was convinced that a lady was waiting for him and became greatly upset trying to find a way of getting rid of her for fear of what the Emperor might say. He took my arm, begged me to save him and to give orders that a woman who dared to be so forward in her advances be dismissed at once. He gave me her name and we thereby discovered that it was the famous Mademoiselle Georges, whose letter he had shown and about whom he was so embarrassed.

In spite of our laughter at seeing him so confused and at his disclosures, he refused to believe that it could be a joke. He insisted we should all go to his apartment with him. He could not bear to go there alone and his fear of what the Emperor, with his well-known severity in such matters, might say, was intense. Finally we all took lights and led him back through the long corridors. Our escort looked like a procession. The

Prince of Bavaria was in front. Behind us came our ladies-in-waiting. Everyone else in the house had gone to bed. When we entered his room the Prince's fright and our mirth increased at the sight of a figure sleeping peacefully in his bed. There the joke had to end. We were obliged to show him the wig on the doll. He seemed very much upset. The next morning the Emperor and Empress laughed heartily at this practical joke. I do not know whether the Crown Prince, who laughed a great deal too, ever really forgave us.*

* See Note p. 275.

CHAPTER VI

THE QUEEN OF HOLLAND—THE COURT OF KING LOUIS (1806-1807)

Prince Louis Bonaparte is called to the throne of Holland—A last glimpse of France—Arrival at the Hague—Public rejoicing, private misery—Trip to the Rhineland—Battle of Jena—Portrait of Talleyrand—Home life of the King—A domestic peace-treaty and why it was not signed

THESE hours of merriment were fleeting. Youth needs them; but as soon as I returned to my own home, I found nothing but moroseness and severity. A new trouble was about to befall me.

A delegation headed by Admiral Verhuell arrived from Holland and my husband informed me one morning that the Emperor had just told him that he, Louis, was to be King of Holland.*

"I do hope you will not accept the appointment," I exclaimed. As a matter of fact I expected my husband to make the same objections as when it had been a question of giving a throne to his son, and I thought he would refuse a crown he had never seemed anxious to obtain. As soon as the question of his nomination came up Caroline called on us. "I attended the marriage of Prince Eugène at Munich," she said, "only on the Emperor's promise that I was to have the crown of Holland. I do not wish to remind him of his promise without your consent, but will you not allow me to do so?" Both my husband and I assured her that we should be pleased to see her receive the crown, but she did not obtain it.

Need Fate have kept this crown in store for me as my most cruel trial and in the midst of my unhappiness tear me from my dearest interests, from my only consolations,

* See Note p 276

from my family, my friends, and from the land which I had been taught to love so dearly? I will admit that my husband's calm manner surprised me. I did not believe he was ambitious, yet I recognized that he was well pleased with what had occurred. Until then every change had so distressed him! But now he enjoyed the idea of becoming his own master and, above all, mine. No longer would any social decorum, any sense of propriety restrain him from exercising his rights over me. Independent of his brother, he now would have nothing to fear. This, as I understood later, was the reason for the secret joy and apparent resignation with which he accepted the offered throne.

The Emperor, in order to realize his plans, required his brothers to be ambitious, and he could easily forgive annoyances that had their source in a thirst for power and grandeur, which he understood better than anyone. Hence he could not forgive me for being downcast because I was to be made a queen. "Can it be," he said, "that you are not worthy of such a position? Go and reign, make your subjects happy—that is a satisfaction which must delight your heart. What I have done for you exists in no other country. The Constitution makes you regent in your own right. This honour is gratifying. Show yourself worthy of it!"—"Ah, sire," I cried, "do what you will, I shall always have humdrum ideals, if I must so define the love of country, friends and family!" He laughed at my exclamation, and to prevent too much emotion cut short my farewells with my mother.

At one time there had been a question of leaving our children in France as they were the sole heirs to the throne. The Council of State desired it, but the Emperor, who at the time that my husband refused to let him adopt our son had made himself the legal guardian of all boys in his family after the age of seven only, did not wish to infringe this law, and perhaps he feared a protest.

Monsieur de Talleyrand, who told me these details, was very anxious to have his brother, Baron de l'Empire, appointed our Grand Chamberlain, but my husband

refused. All the younger members of the French nobility who had not yet rallied to the Imperial Court thought they could reconcile their pride and their ambition by obtaining places at the Court of Holland. Monsieur Rainulphe d'Osmand solicited the post of Chamberlain, someone else that of equerry, but the good-looking ones, those to whom my husband referred as "*les agréables*," did not find favour with him and he refused all their requests.

Just as I was on the point of leaving for Holland, Monsieur Adrien de Montmorency came to tell me that Madame de Gesvres, a woman eighty years of age, had been ordered to leave Paris, and I went to Saint-Cloud to speak about it to the Emperor. When he learned that the poor woman was so old, and above all that she was the last descendant of the famous Duguesclin, not only did he allow her to stay, but he bestowed on her a pension of six thousand francs. This shows how severe he could be on the tale-bearing of his police service and how well he could repair harshness when he knew the truth.

The marriage of Adèle was much on my mind at this time. I was as difficult to please in my choice of a husband for her as I had been for myself. No one came up to my standards, and it was agreed that she should join me in Holland where I hoped to find a man worthy of her. I must do my husband the justice of saying that in spite of his usual suspiciousness of all women, he never ventured to suspect the character of Adèle. Her sweet disposition, her well-balanced mind compelled him, as they did everyone else, to submit to her charm and admire her. For a long while he tried to make her act as judge of our domestic difficulties. He set forth his grievances and sought to justify his conduct to her, but as he could not convince her, he ceased to honour her with his confidence. When I parted from Adèle our hope of seeing one another in the near future softened our grief.

Saint-Leu had been fixed as our starting-point and my husband, with all my household, was already there. I came back late one day from Saint-Cloud, where it had been hard to take leave of my mother, and I stopped in Paris to make final arrangements. The courtyard of

my house was full of carriages and people, for the first part of our luggage train was about to take the road. All this bustle and the sight of the post-horses wrung my heart. Two days later it would be my turn to bid farewell to France. At last they were off and complete silence ensued. With one of my ladies I was waiting for the carriage that was to take me to Saint-Leu, when the only servant left in the house informed me that a visitor wished to speak a word to me in private. It was Monsieur de Flahaut,* who, since it was impossible for him to enter my house under normal conditions, had cast aside all prudence to bid me good bye. For the first time since I loved him I found myself alone with him. Fear and emotion held me speechless. As he stepped nearer to me I uttered a cry. "Remember," he said, "that if anyone came to your call you would be compromised"—"Ah," I replied, "let people think all the harm they will, provided I do none." Then with the utmost simplicity I confessed that I loved him but that dear as he was to me, my virtue was still dearer, since it was that alone which sustained me, in the midst of my husband's frightful suspicions, that it was my only true consolation, and that never would I lose such a priceless possession. I told him I wished him every happiness, I assured him he would always have my friendship, and I left him in a state difficult to describe.

My husband, my children, and I left Saint-Leu on the evening of June 15th, 1806.* My eldest son slept all night on my lap, the other on his governess's knees. My husband and I, absorbed each in our own thoughts and without saying a word to one another, were probably both suffering from our inability to share our common grief or seek consolation from the person whom a sacred tie should have rendered dear to us, and who then seemed the only friend left to us by Fortune.

Now came that most painful moment when I was obliged to leave our French escort and saw the Dutch authorities awaiting us on the other side of the frontier. To change one's nationality! To be no longer French! Sorrowfully I turned my eyes towards the land that gave me birth. My throbbing heart prevented me from

replying to the speech with which the Dutch authorities greeted me. My husband did so for both of us. Though he, too, seemed much affected, he had the gift of returning compliments and acquitted himself extremely well all along the way. We stopped at the House-in-the-Wood, near the Hague, and made our entry a few days later.

One day Admiral Verhuell appeared to me to be much embarrassed. It was he who had governed from the time of our appointment until our arrival and, in accordance with the English custom which had been followed in Holland for the Prince and Princess of Orange, he had placed my name after the King's in the public prayers. The first act of my husband was to remove the name of the Queen. The Admiral pointed out the bad impression this would make, especially as the prayers had been already said for a month. He even came to tell me about it, thinking that I should protest. But what was there to be done? I could not help feeling hurt at these unfriendly acts of my husband, although I should have been too used to them to heed them.

Much to my astonishment the King, who was organizing his official household, filled the most important posts with Frenchmen chosen from among those who had followed him to Holland. None of them expected this. They had thought they would only spend three months of each year in Holland and they were delighted. The Dutch very properly protested, and misunderstandings arose between the two parties. Monsieur de S  n  gra, whom the Emperor would never receive, obtained the most prominent position (that of general inspector and head of the navy department) and he gave cause of complaint to everyone by spying and often by the lack of common civility in the way he did it.

My husband had scarcely spoken to me for a long time, but one day he had a serious talk with me, preceded by a letter in which all our married life was passed in review. His love for me, his grief and my coldness were all set forth in detail. In short, he was come in person to beg for a reconciliation. "Stop," I said, "I no longer can consent to such a thing. I have been too unhappy.

Nothing has escaped me, neither your unjust suspicions nor your scandalous investigations. I have forgiven you, but so much grief has inevitably altered my feeling for you. Change your conduct and my sentiments will change too. I will not try to deceive you, I must be won back and it will take time." He lost his temper, shed a few tears and told me that he did not believe in woman's virtue, that if I had been unhappy I had no doubt had consolations. "Yes," I replied, "a consolation of which you cannot deprive me—that of knowing I have never deserved all that you make me suffer." He left me without a word of affection or of regret.

Our entry into Rotterdam was remarkable for the enthusiasm of the people. The same thing happens everywhere—people love change and expect happiness in novelty. My only feeling was dismay at being dragged along by a mob that seemed beside itself. We had not been able to prevent the crowd from unharnessing the horses and drawing our carriage in their stead. This explosive joy, so similar to fury, froze me with terror. My nerves were too weak to bear the sight of it, and every moment I thought I saw someone crushed beneath our wheels.

"Alas!" I said to my husband, as I recalled Madame Campan's stories, "Alas! Thus they received Marie Antoinette in France, with the same ardour they showed later in sacrificing her." It was not the moment to recall such sad memories, but everything was clouded by my state of mind.

We did not remain long in Holland but went on to Wiesbaden, where the King wished to take the waters. While there we lived in the Palace of Mayence, until my husband, tiring of the waters of Wiesbaden, went to Aix-la-Chapelle, where I followed him two days later. Adèle had joined me at Mayence. I sent all my baggage and the officers of my household to await me at Cologne and embarked on the Rhine aboard the handsome yacht belonging to the Prince of Nassau. Monsieur Auguste, who had brought his daughter to me, was the only man who accompanied us on the water. The weather was fine,

the scenery enchanting. We spent our days admiring the different landmarks which passed before our eyes. These rocks, these ancient strongholds recalled the age of chivalry, and for a moment transported us far from the world in which we live, and which always seems the least attractive. My eldest son played near at hand while I sang ballads and accompanied myself on my guitar; and, inspired by the beauties of the scene, I even composed some. Many pilgrims—a sight new to me—followed us chanting psalms, and from the shores the villagers put out in boats to offer fruit and flowers. In the evening we anchored and each fell asleep in her little cabin to the sound of a serenade from some neighbouring village. This calm after so much agitation, this freedom after so much constraint, combined to make the three days of this journey three red-letter days in my life.

When we arrived at Cologne I saw the whole town waiting for me on the port. I was obliged to pass through the city at a snail's pace in the midst of an inquisitive crowd, and in the evening attend a ball given for me by the Grand Duke of Berg who was staying at Düsseldorf. His wife, Princess Caroline, had remained in Paris, displeased by the nomination of her husband to the Grand Duchy of Berg and Cleves, which she considered less than his desert or hers. She never consented to go there.

On leaving France I thought I had said a last farewell to those I loved. Fate ruled otherwise. *Monsieur de Flahaut* passed through Aix-la-Chapelle while we were there, and accompanied the Grand Duke of Berg when the latter called to take leave of us before joining the army then marching on Prussia.

On our return to Holland my husband was obliged to take command of the army that was marching towards Wesel, and, a raid by the English being feared as the country was stripped of its troops, it was decided that my children and I should join my mother at Mayence,* whither she had accompanied the Emperor and where she was to remain for the duration of the war.

The Princess of Baden also came there from Mannheim,

* See Note p 276.

where she was living, and we were joined by all the young ladies who had so long regarded me as their mainstay and who were anxious to have news of their husbands.

The battle of Jena dealt Prussia a mortal blow from which she seemed unlikely to recover. The Emperor had accustomed us so thoroughly to the idea of victory that the possibility of a defeat never entered our minds. Our only anxiety was for the lives of the combatants, our only alarm the thought of the dangers to which they were exposed.* A battle which seemed decisive aroused our enthusiasm because it made us hope for the end of the war. This however was still far off. Every day thousands of prisoners passed through Mayence and under the windows of my house which was situated opposite the bridge. I often gave them money. They were unfortunate, therefore I considered them as no different from Frenchmen.

We received in a body all the generals and officers belonging to Hesse-Cassel. My mother showed so much tact and grace in consoling them and in offering them her support that they almost forgot that they were prisoners in the enemy's country. The Princess of Nassau and her daughters came every Sunday to see the Empress and, as our armies advanced, the Princes from the occupied territories came to ask for my mother's protection. The Princess of Gotha, daughter of the Elector of Hesse-Cassel, was one of those who interested us most on account of her gentle manner and her father's misfortunes.

Among the official reports which reached us several contained offensive remarks about the Queen of Prussia. We regretted this and my mother even wrote to the Emperor about it. He answered that he detested scheming women beyond anything, that she herself had accustomed him to women who were gentle and kind, and he added that the tears of Madame Hatzfeld and her deep emotion had won from him the pardon of her husband so that he did not deserve to be reproached for his treatment of her sex.

At Mayence certain regiments were quartered, known as the *gardes d'honneur*. They were recruited among young

* See Note p. 126

men belonging to the best and richest families in France who had formed these special corps rather than begin their military careers as privates in the line regiments. The Emperor had given the command to Monsieur de Montmorency-Laval. Marshal Kellermann was in charge of their general organization and appointed the officers from among the recruits themselves. Monsieur de Talleyrand asked me one day to recommend Monsieur de Labédoyère, a cousin of Monsieur de Flahaut.* An excellent reason for me to interest myself in him! I obtained a commission as second lieutenant for him and he came to thank me. The officers were in the habit of calling on the Empress in the evening and of course I spoke more with Monsieur de Labédoyère than with any of the others.

We went to Frankfort for a few days' visit to the Prince-Primate, who gave very fine receptions in our honour. Evening parties, concerts, balls and excursions filled the short time we spent there. I attended a masked ball where the novelty of the scene amused me greatly, but I felt very shy and did not venture to speak to anyone or leave the arm of my Dutch lady-in-waiting. Everyone had imagined they recognized me and crowded about a lady who was seated in a chair that had been specially prepared for me. It was one of the Emperor's pages who took my part, and this mistake in itself was enough to amuse me.

When we were back in Mayence, Monsieur de Labédoyère told me that among the masked women he had recognized one with whom he had had a long conversation. If I wished, he could repeat this conversation word for word as he had committed it to writing, and he asked leave to show it to me the next day. Curious to know if someone had passed herself off as me I took the paper, and as the joke had been played in a ball-room, I began reading aloud to the ladies who were in attendance a love letter delicately and tactfully worded but so indiscreet and so flattering that I did not dare take it to myself.

Judge of my confusion! I refused decidedly to admit that these phrases were meant for me. I was

* See Note p 276.

not named but all my ladies protested that it was for me. I was the more surprised as Monsieur de Labédoyère had never said a word that would have made me think he was interested in me. I saw Monsieur de Labédoyère again and did not speak to him. He seemed unhappy and ill at ease. I no longer had any doubts and reproached myself for having been unduly amiable to him, for he could not know why and might easily have deceived himself. So on the same evening that I had made up my mind how to act, I went up to him and managed to lead our conversation in such a way as to insert the following phrase uttered shyly but in a firm voice "I should deeply regret it if anyone became attached to me. I could not return his affection. I care only for the esteem of those who know me, my fate and my feelings are fixed there could be nothing but unhappiness for anyone who cared for me in the least."

Soon after this, Monsieur de Labédoyère left to join the army. When he took leave of me he was obviously moved, indeed his manner, usually so cold, made his emotion the more apparent.

It was during my stay in Mayence that I became better acquainted with Monsieur de Talleyrand. I had often wondered how people could praise his wit and consider him so clever when he so rarely displayed those gifts. For years I had watched him enter the drawing room of Malmaison with his careless, distant air, dragging his foot, leaning against the first chair he came to and scarcely bowing to the people he knew. He seldom spoke a word to me. At Mayence on the other hand he sought my company and took the trouble to make himself agreeable. I was surprised and even flattered, for the attentions of a man who is chary of them make a special impression, and I am convinced that his great reputation for intellect (though I by no means deny his right to it), was gained rather by the little he said, and said so well, than by anything that he did. He is chiefly remarkable for his epigrams, his good breeding, his great skill in divining the reasons for other people's actions and conceals his own, the self-confidence of a *grand seigneur*, and a reserved

indolence which makes him so easy and agreeable to get on with that people easily mistake it for kindness. Indulgent towards every vice, lending a patient ear to plans of schemers, his only answer is an approving smile which scares away no one and profits by success when that is won. The charm of his wit makes up for his lack of moral strength and he is placed at the head of a party which people think he created, whereas he is scarcely in its confidence. His attractiveness, which is great, is largely due to the vanity of others. I have been taken by it myself : if he deign to speak to you he is very kind, and you are near loving him if he ask after your health.

Monsieur de Rémusat who trimmed his sails to every breeze followed Monsieur de Talleyrand about and no longer spoke a word in the hope that he, too, might seem important. It was supposed that he kept the police informed of what went on in Society at Mayence. He sent reports to Marshal Duroc and young ladies did not dare be seen chatting with young men for fear of providing material for the reports of Monsieur de Rémusat. I left Mayence soon after New Year's Day, 1806 : the season was bitterly cold. Nevertheless my health, though still delicate, had somewhat improved. I arrived at the Hague a few days after the sad accident at Leyden.* My husband on that occasion had behaved in a manner that had won the esteem of the Dutch. As soon as the news of the explosion reached him, he hastened to the spot, encouraged the rescue parties and to assist in saving the injured, exposed himself to the danger of being buried under the ruins. My heart was broken as I passed through the town. I wished to do my share in helping the unfortunate victims and I gave twenty thousand francs for those who had suffered most.* My husband objected, but I insisted.

As a rule, he did a great deal for the poor. Even in France he had given large sums, and in Holland his gifts were enormous. If I chanced to give someone a pension in response to a request for help, I was sure that if he heard of it he would double the amount without being asked. One would have thought he was trying to efface the impression made by what I had done. Perhaps I

* See Note p 276

was mistaken in thinking this but I believed it at the time, and so instead of visiting charitable institutions and helping them extend their work, and in general concerning myself with philanthropy as a queen should do, I went out only to walk or drive, and, keeping aloof from everything, I displayed the most complete indifference so as not to give umbrage to my husband.

When I arrived at the Hague the King had already been back there some time. Of an evening my ladies-in-waiting and the officers of his household were in the habit of meeting in his apartments. There was no formality about these receptions and it was more like a family gathering than a royal court. People played parlour games and sometimes the fun even became noisy. As soon as I was back no one was allowed to enter my drawing room any longer. Everything became serious and imposing and even the simplest gatherings were forbidden. One morning without anyone knowing why, all the French who had rooms at the palace were ordered to leave and take quarters in the town. Not a moment's delay was allowed and everyone wondered "What can have happened last night? What can be the cause of this abrupt and drastic order?"

A little later a still more extraordinary order was issued. After six o'clock no one was allowed to enter or leave the palace without a card signed by Monsieur de Ségura. Tradespeople were arrested, others thought they would be obliged to spend the night in the passages. Every day there were cross questions and crooked answers and new witticisms which were whispered, and that I knew only through my young ladies. But I could not laugh with them too many sad things were bound up with it all. The Dutch at first thought that these precautions, which they could not understand, were due to mistrust of them and they were offended. Later, when they found out that all was due to domestic entanglements (a thing which surprised them greatly, for we had arrived with the reputation of being a model couple) they thought no more about it.

As my husband's obvious jealousy always seemed to



me a public insult, I had been really embarrassed by the first nominations made to my household by the King of Holland. My equerry was the Baron de Renesse, a most worthy man, but had he lived in the days of Cervantes, he might have served as model for Don Quixote. The Chamberlain, Monsieur Van der Dun, was still more ridiculous in appearance, although with a remarkable intelligence. The Frenchmen, who always love a joke, insisted that he looked like Sancho Panza who had swallowed Mr. Punch. The other members of my household were cast in the same mould. Of all the handsome Brussels guard of honour who formed part of our escort, and of all the young men belonging to the best families of France, who had asked for posts at our court, the King chose only Monsieur de Marmol, a fine man in everything but looks. These appointments were so marked and so visibly inspired by jealousy that they always grated on me, and as my equerries were all of them at least sixty years old I never on their account dared ride fast when I went out on horseback. There was a Frenchman who was only fifty in my service, but he did not remain long. He was ordered to rejoin his regiment and obliged to leave the same day. It was in vain that Monsieur de Caulaincourt, our High Chamberlain, intervened asking that he might at least be allowed to finish his week's service lest some dishonour should attach to his dismissal. It was no use. Louis thought, maybe, that despite his years he interested me.

At all the state receptions I went round the room and spoke to everyone. The King told me that I remained standing too long, that it tired him and that I need merely bow and not stop to speak to so many persons. At the following reception I followed his instructions. To my surprise I saw that he did exactly what he had forbidden me to do, going up to each person and making a few pleasant remarks to them. Meanwhile I remained alone standing by the fireplace and waiting for him to finish. How can such jealousy be explained?

I had brought the wife of Marshal Duroc with me from Mayence. She returned to France and took Adèle with her. I have said elsewhere that my husband's dis-

trust and suspicion were disarmed by Adèle's virtue and have spoken of his efforts to gain her esteem. He willingly consented to her marriage with Monsieur de Broc, Grand Marshal of the Palace, who had been in love with her for a long time. As for her, whose feelings were gentle like everything about her, she loved him tenderly from the day that she became his wife.

After Adèle and Madame Duroc went home, my life grew more dreary than ever. For till that time the presence of my friends put some restraint on my husband, but there was now no reason for him to spare my feelings. He took pleasure in making our discord known and attracted public attention to our domestic difficulties. He came to my rooms only at dinner-time and by the state staircase, and returned to his own apartments immediately afterwards. He went to the theatre alone, and gave informal evening concerts to which my ladies-in-waiting were invited but from which I was excluded. I bore all these strange whims patiently and endured them in silence so long as they were hidden from the eyes of the world. But what would become of me now that I was to be tried by public opinion? Even if it strove to be fair and impartial it must surely think me guilty. I should have condemned any woman in the same situation, for one cannot imagine a husband seeking to ruin his wife's good name for the mere pleasure of ruining and without even the shadow of evidence against her. All these thoughts drove me to despair. A prisoner in my palace, I no longer dared receive even the visits of my young ladies-in-waiting or leave my apartment to go to one of them if she happened to be ill. A footman who had followed one of the émigrés abroad was engaged to wait on me. He always slept in my ante-room and wrote down how many times my young ladies came to see me. I often noticed that, when he brought wood for the fire, without anyone having asked for it, he would push aside the window curtains to see if there were not some one behind them. I pretended not to notice anything. I knew too well whose orders he was obeying to wait to hear them repeated to me by a servant. Madame

de Boubers once found this man hidden in my children's room. She was alarmed on their account and felt it her duty to speak of it to my husband, who sent him away for a while.

After this life of agony and tears had lasted some time my husband came upstairs one day to see me, with a letter from the Emperor in his hand. He was much upset.—“You must have been complaining about me,” he said “See what my brother writes ; how unfortunate I am !” I read the following reproaches. “I have heard of the way you treat your wife. All who surround you are scandalized by it. I wish you were like so many men in Paris. You would be betrayed and perhaps happier. But I gave you a virtuous woman and you do not know how to appreciate her.” I returned the letter to my husband, assuring him that I had never complained to anyone and, for that matter, he read everything I wrote to the Emperor. “Then it must be the French ambassador,” he went on angrily. “I will refuse to receive him. He will only be allowed to call with the rest of the diplomatic corps. But what injustice ! To dare say that I ill-treat you. I beg of you to write telling my brother that there is not a word of truth in these reports.” I did as he asked and in my letter to the Emperor I found courage to say that I was happy.

It is a most extraordinary thing that soon afterwards the English newspapers repeated the reproaches the Emperor had made to my husband concerning his treatment of me—which shows that my husband had secretaries who were not Frenchmen ! I do not know if he was touched by my conduct in stifling my just cause for complaint, but at all events he inflicted a new form of torture on me, for one evening he came up the secret stairs that connected his room with mine and gave me to understand that my life and my reputation were in his hands. “I love you,” he said, “and you know it. But I am ashamed at having to appear as my wife's discarded lover. Let us set an example of harmony, of complete domestic happiness, and you will find me again at your knees. But you, on your part, whenever we are in public.

must give signs of your affection for me. A woman's honesty is judged by the degree of her love for her husband."—"I cannot deceive you," I replied. "I do not know what the ostensible signs that a wife ought to show of her love for her husband may be. I will never behave otherwise than as I think right. As for the attachment I had for you, you have estranged it. I am far from my country, my family, my friends. You are all that I have. Be kind to me and I shall love you, but one cannot in a day forget what one has suffered. Be a father to me. I need one. Give me a little sincere affection and my heart will respond." I thought my words had touched him, for he exclaimed, "Ah, Hortense, if you only loved me, you would be perfect. We can still be happy together if you wish it. I long to be reconciled with you, but on one condition, you must avow the faults you have committed." I began to smile. "Dear me!" I exclaimed, "if I have not committed any it was surely not your fault! It was because I was happy to have an easy conscience."—"That I cannot believe," he replied. "Tell me all and everything will be forgiven."

For a whole month he not only wrote to me by day but he disturbed my sleep at night, constantly repeating the same thing. Through a little door which opened into my alcove and which I had not dared to lock for fear of rousing his suspicions, he would enter, waking me with a start and forcing me to listen to all his lamentations. Sometimes he was so despondent that I did not know what to do. I was so worn out and unstrung that I was obliged to ask him to postpone the discussion till the following day. He would do so and return with more of the same reproaches. "You have made me the unhappiest man in all the world," he said. "I hold absolutely to a reconciliation and to knowing the truth. Otherwise we must separate for ever. I am writing to my brother that I am prepared to give up everything. I cannot live with a person who makes me suffer so. You will be the cause of me and will be sorry for it. It is grief that wears away my health. It is you who are destroying it." What can I do," I cried, all tears after such cruel treatment.

"if I had gone astray I should confess to you. Look me in the face. Truth tells its own tale. Do you read on my features signs of confusion or untruth?" But nothing convinced him.

He adopted another plan, and one day came to me in triumph. "You will not admit anything. Good! I tell you I now know all and have proofs against you."—"That cannot be true," I replied firmly and without pausing to weigh my words. "One cannot have proofs of what has never occurred. If I were guilty your stratagem might have succeeded, but it is unworthy of you to invent such a tale." He remained motionless and was silent. Nevertheless he harped constantly on the idea that such absolute virtue could not possibly exist. More exhausted than I can say by this constantly renewed persecution, I became like one of those unfortunates who, on the rack, make a false confession to end their sufferings. It came into my head to invent some story that would put an end to this state of things and restore peace and quiet. I was only embarrassed as to the name of my accomplice. I could not deliberately inflict my husband's hatred on anyone, and I wished to choose a person who had ceased to live. Adèle was no longer with me. I confided my plan to Madame de Boubers, who for a long time had been a witness of my misfortunes. She protested against my project and made me promise that I would not execute it.

At last my husband, worn out by his useless efforts, appeared one day with the following treaty which he wished me to sign. He promised that it should be the price of happiness, but that if I refused he would complain to the Emperor in the strongest terms. I asked him to leave me this paper in order that I might answer each clause separately. Here it is. I have always kept a copy of it.

"We, Louis and Hortense, desiring to put an end to the state of discomfort and constraint in which we have been living together for a long time past, and believing that if we have been unhappy and disunited it is because we were married before we had come to

care for each other, desiring at length to find a means by which we may hereafter live happily and profit by five years' experience, we have resolved to observe the resolutions set forth in the present private treaty to which we have apposed our signatures. We, each of us, swear and promise before God to fulfil all the conditions set forth herewith.

"Paragraph 1 —It is agreed that all mistakes, errors and faults, of whatever nature, committed by either of us in the past, and which may have been prejudicial to the other, are hereby annulled, forgiven and forgotten, and it is forbidden to refer in any way to the unhappy past.

"Paragraph 2 —We promise henceforth to cherish one another, not merely in fact but of our own free will, and we choose one another as though hitherto we had been disengaged and free. We promise mutually not to separate under any pretext whatever, nor ask to do so. And should any such request be made by one, the other shall refuse it. We will prefer each other to any or all members of our respective families. Lastly, we will show signs both in public and private of our love for and confidence in one another.

"Paragraph 3 —We promise on our honour not to correspond, I, Louis Bonaparte with any woman, without the Queen's consent, and I, Hortense, with any man without my husband's consent, and this without any further explanation but in virtue of reciprocity.

"Paragraph 4 —We promise to unite our efforts as always to make common cause to keep the guardianship of our children and not allow them to be adopted by the Emperor or the Empress.

"Paragraph 5 —We promise to make all our reciprocal requests to one another when we are alone together and never in the presence of others.

"Paragraph 6 —We solemnly promise on our honour to receive no visitor and to make no visit without first having informed the other of the fact. And we further promise, I, Louis, not to receive any woman, and I,

Hortense, not to receive any man or any woman without my husband's permission.

"Paragraph 7.—We promise that the arrangement of our apartments and the choice of our attendants shall be such as is mutually agreeable and that nothing will be done until both parties have agreed upon it. We will examine and discuss together the arrangements that already exist.

"Paragraph 8.—We promise to have only one purse, that is to say that Hortense will have no private funds of her own and that no correspondence about business matters can be carried on by the Queen without the King's consent.

"By performing and carrying out the above conditions in a loyal and scrupulous manner we hope to live as virtuous and honourable people. And in order to confirm our reconciliation we hereby promise solemnly to live entirely for one another and for our two children.

(Signed) "Louis."

This is the reply that I wrote in the margin of Louis's contract :

"I cannot sign this agreement because I refuse to deceive you and it is impossible for me to carry out the allotted task.

"According to the first paragraph I must forget the wrongs that have been done to me. I can try my best, but it is not in a single day that one can wipe out so many years of unhappiness. Moreover it could only be your behaviour towards me, by showing your esteem and confidence, that could bring about my un-failing return to you.

"As regards paragraph 2, you have not made me so happy that you can take the place of my entire family. The latter consists of the Emperor whom I have always considered as my father, the Empress and my brother. I will take advantage of every opportunity that occurs to be near them.

"As for paragraph 3, how can you expect me to write to my family only when you allow me to do so ?

As far as other persons are concerned I agree readily enough

"Paragraph 4 — You have the right to appoint and dismiss all the persons who belong to my household. I have never appointed one sole person without your approval. But I will never give my consent to the dismissal of anyone who has done nothing wrong

' Paragraph 5 — My hopes and my happiness will always be to have my children with me. But God is master of their fate and He will decide it

" Paragraph 6 is easy enough to fulfil

" Paragraphs 7 and 8 show how little confidence you have in me. It would, however, be easy enough to conform to them, disagreeable as it is to realize that they are prompted by suspicion

" This is my point of view, so different from yours. If all these explanations are painful it is because they lead nowhere and because I have lost all hope. You ask to have here and now what only time can give, and especially that frankness and confidence I deserve and which you have never shown me. Nevertheless you may rest assured that whatever may be your conduct towards me you will always retain my friendship, and that the father of my children can never become indifferent to me.

' This April 16th, 1807

HORTENSE "

Why did the king ask me to make a promise he knew I could not keep? Was it possible for me to declare that I would no longer wish to write to my family, or see my brother if he returned to France? Louis was my master, he could prevent me from doing these things but I could not give my consent to his doing so. And so I had to bear all sorts of reproaches from the Emperor, who received a letter from my husband complaining that I made him miserable.

The king was ill for two days. I did not leave his side for a moment. He must have noticed my solicitude and zealous care. He seemed to be touched by it. His first expressions of tenderness showed his unfeigned

desire to find me at fault. The fact that he was unable to do this embittered him and he seemed to be saying to himself : " How I could love you and how happy I should be if only you were guilty ! " I was utterly discouraged, all hope of happiness had fled. But as my life's work was to make someone else happy I persisted in trying to achieve this. How many times have I stifled a complaint or a sigh in order not to shame the man to whom I had vowed obedience ! I so much wanted to make him happy in spite of his natural melancholy. I strove to temper his nature and fed my chimera with all the efforts of futile zeal ! - I seemed to believe myself possessed of super-human powers. Then, too, how often, over-wrought by the sharpness of my pain and fired by my love of well-doing, did I not exclaim to myself : " I suffer cruelly. What matter ! I welcome suffering for it makes one better ! "

CHAPTER VII

THE DEATH OF THE PRINCE ROYAL—TRAVELS IN SOUTHERN FRANCE (MAY-AUGUST, 1807)

Illness and death of the Prince Royal—A mother's agony—Change of scene—The Pyrenees—Lourdes—Pan—Bayonne—Into Spain—Mountain excursions—Return to Saint-Cloud—The Emperor rebukes Hortense—A drive with Napoleon and Jos'phine—The Emperor's opinion of the rulers of Prussia and Russia.

ALAS ! the moment was at hand when all my energy deserted me. No, I did not know what sorrow is ! I had not yet experienced the full bitterness of grief. My child, who had been the first to teach my heart how deeply it could love, was now to teach me these other lessons. My hand trembles as I tell the story and my tears flow while I write.

I stood at his bedside with his governess watching his sleep. His breathing was irregular and oppressed, I could not take my eyes from him. Fear entered my soul. I prayed, I implored Providence to be just. "My child must not die," I kept repeating. "What have I done? For what offence am I being punished?" And my conscience reassured me. The foremost doctors in Holland were in attendance. My tears might trouble them, so I tried to be calm, to discuss my son's illness with them as though he were a stranger. It seemed to me that had I been in their place I should have found some remedy. Yet not one of them recognized his illness. It was cruel. In two days he died.* It was towards me that he turned his pale, wasted little face, it was I to whom his lips scarcely able to move, seemed to call, it was his mother's name that I saw framed on those discoloured lips, as he

* See Note p. 277

breathed his last. And I survived ! How can God allow a mother to outlive her child !

My husband, overcome by grief, threw himself at the foot of his son's bed, while I fell into a state so alarming that every care rallied round my person. I had uttered a piercing shriek when I saw that my son was lifeless. I could not shed a tear. They brought me the child that was left me. I looked at him, then pushed him away. "I do not want to love anything again on earth." I felt I was about to die and I awaited impatiently for the hour to strike. Religion might have succoured me, but at that moment I did not respond to any religious sentiment, all those emotions seemed to have been stifled in my heart.

Princess Caroline hastened to me from Paris, as well as Adèle and her sister, the wife of Marshal Ney. Far from being touched by this token of their affection, I looked at them without saying a word. I knew that they were my friends, but I had ceased to care for anyone. My mother came to the Château of Laeken to which I was taken. She was overcome with grief at the death of her grandson, yet found courage enough to come and nurse her daughter. In what a state she found me. Much had been hoped from our meeting. It was thought the presence of my beloved mother would excite a flow of tears.

On my arrival at the palace of Laeken, the Empress, weeping, rushed forward to meet me. I recognized her perfectly. I looked at her, but not a word or a feeling showed that I retained a spark of affection for her. She had not conceived a condition which no remedy could touch, and the sight of me filled her with alarm and grief. Doctor Corvisart saw that only time and change of scene could improve my health and that drugs would kill me. His counsel was followed and my husband approved of it; if only I should have been touched.

My mother took me out of the estates. It did not matter to her no preferences, no will of my too many people made me of

We left for Paris. As we passed Saint-Denis I was reminded that there lay the remains of my son. My imagination seemed to enjoy every idea which could increase my sorrow. I looked at my remaining child. He was pale and delicate, he needed all my care. I was about to leave him and to say farewell to my mother. It would be natural for such a separation to cause me a pang. Well, I felt nothing! I left them without shedding a single tear. I was taken to the Pyrenees. The journey improved my health but all my thoughts were still turned towards death. I considered it as an act of justice that Heaven owed me and awaited with pious resignation for the order of release that I had vowed I would never attempt to hasten.

When we arrived at Bagnères, the beautiful valley of Campan was too cheerful to please me. This enchanting landscape was not in keeping with my state of mind. What I needed was stern and wild scenery in harmony with profound grief. Therefore I stayed only a few days at Bagnères, and went on to Caunterets* where the mountains, huddled closer together as they increase in height, make Nature wilder and more imposing.

The letters that I received from my husband touched me. His grief seemed to equal mine, and for the first time we understood one another. He was distressed about my health and was unhappy that he could find no way of consoling me. He did not even dare to come to see me, and I understood his position and felt for him. He had caused me so much pain that he must have doubted whether he could prove a consolation to me. I wrote to him in a friendly manner, for in all sincerity I had completely forgiven him. He repeated so often that in the last two months he had come to see life differently, that he now wished only to make me happy, that the torments he had suffered before our misfortune when we were living side by side were what had made him wish to find me guilty of some fault so as to have the right to ask for separation, but now it was I, and I only, who could give him the necessary courage to perform his various duties. In the end I was touched. I believed what he said.

I replied that so far as happiness was concerned, I was not sure whether I could bestow it and that, as for courage, I had none left. This was the truth.

Impatient at being left so long alone, Louis finally came to the Pyrenees and spent a few days at Cauterets. I was still wholly absorbed by my grief. My husband wished to be kind and attentive, but do what he would, all the defects of his unhappy disposition came to the surface. I trembled at the thoughts of having again to suffer from his behaviour and that terror was the first thing that took my mind off my loss. Another reason for dismay was that I did not feel strength to sacrifice myself to his happiness. Adèle gave me courage by trying to persuade me that our common sorrow had changed my husband and that I ought to try once more to make him happy. I begged for time, my mind was taken up with the thought of death, and I saw nothing that could win me back to the love of life. The King saw that I was still too ill for him to speak to me of anything but the loss we had so lately suffered. He went to other watering-places in the Pyrenees whence he wrote to me often. His only wish was to effect a reconciliation between us, and he was resolved, said he, to bring me to consent joyfully to this.

One day his letter would be affectionate ; on the next he would insist on two things as being essential to his peace of mind, namely, that after our reconciliation, in order to be an example of all domestic virtues, I should never address any of the young ladies with whom I had been brought up, as "thou," the other that I should never receive anyone in my private apartments. I was dumbfounded by such precise exactions, all the more so because, as I have already said, only women waited on me in my own quarters. As for the detail of addressing my young ladies as "thou," it was a schoolgirl habit which I had kept up intentionally, for since my elevation in rank had placed me so far above them, I should have felt as if I were showing pride if I had made any change in my way of speaking to them.

I had received two letters written by the Emperor while at the Front. In them he reproached :

was no more fortunate when we stopped at the nunnery of a very severe religious order. In spite of our riding dress they all asked us if we were not French nuns whom the Revolution had driven from our own country. Probably this was due to the fact that they could not understand our interest in them otherwise.

At Saint Sébastien I visited all the points of interest. I climbed up to the fort from which one has a view of the two greatest beauties of nature, the sea and the hills. I had expected to return the same day to Bayonne but the tide, which nearly leaves the port of Passages dry, prevented me from doing so, and I was obliged to spend the night at Saint Sébastien, and next morning set out on the return journey accompanied only by the men from whom we had hired the horses at Irun.

The Prefect of Tarbes, though he had not attended the former royal court as Monsieur de Castellane, Prefect of Pau, had done, was far more discreet, and I was thoroughly satisfied with the way in which he treated me. My husband was waiting at Toulouse to take me back with him to Paris. I was enjoying my informal excursion so much that I asked him to go on ahead and allow me to remain a little while longer in my dear mountains. I would rejoin him in Paris. While waiting for his reply I wished to visit the waterfall at Gavarnie and the springs at Barèges. On hearing this the two prefects of Pau and Tarbes appeared, and Monsieur de Castellane brought me a horse he had had specially trained for me. The Saint Simon family also wished to accompany me. I did not like the idea of admiring the beauties of nature surrounded by all these people. Not wishing to offend anyone I sent all my household to accompany them along the usual road and promised to meet them at the waterfall. I myself left at three o'clock in the morning with Madame de Bro., Monsieur Thiénon, an artist attached to my husband's household, and a guide, who declared he could show us the way over the pass, as he had crossed it when hunting bear, ibizard or chamois. With us were also eight or ten men born in the neighbourhood, but who had never made such a climb. We crossed the Vignemale glaciers.* The dis-

* See Note p. 277

culties proved greater than I had expected. Imagine inaccessible rocks, a mountain-side so steep and so precipitous as to take your breath away at every step. Nowhere was there the least sign of vegetation, nowhere an indication that a human foot had ever trod the soil on which you were standing. Eternal masses of ice gleamed at the bottom of crevasses whose chasms yawned on every hand. After so much effort the view from the top of the peak is not worth one's labour. All one sees is thousands of other peaks, the Brèche de Roland and the Cirque de Gavarnie far beneath you. The only satisfaction to one's pride is the thought that not everyone could have made the climb. I was astonished at having undertaken so arduous a task simply for the sake of escaping the companioning and conventional chatter of two Prefects. On our way down we slid along with our crampons over ice which often cracked under our weight. The torrent lay beneath us. It was necessary to leave this icy valley and return by way of another, in which we were frequently obliged to stop to pull ourselves up over the rocks. On going from one to another as soon as one of them had discovered a possible passage-way. I stopped a moment at the top. Adèle : "Must we not look like women carrying some dreadful burden at the risk of our lives?" They agreed, but appeared so exhausted that they did not. But at the same moment - perhaps because they were tired - had brought thinking he would enter the cave. He was in a terrible condition, his face pale as paper, his hair matted, his eyes sunk, his hands trembling. He took his gun and his knife and went back to his comrades. "I am here," he said, "but I cannot take this any longer. I will go back to the lake or to the spot." He then went back to the lake or to the spot. He increased his pace and went back to the lake or to the spot. In the next hour he found a better path. He altered

I
 Street
 Evening
 I
 W

man who was preparing a display of fireworks to be held in my honour I was delighted to have escaped these so called "festivities," and my pleasure in having done so rewarded me for the fatigue I had undergone.

On reaching Caunterets I heard that my husband would not return to Paris without me and that he expected me at Toulouse as soon as possible. I left the Pyrenees which I had come to love for the sake both of the sorrow that I had dwelt on there and for the solace that nature had offered me. From a farm which had been named after me* I caught a glimpse between two rocks of the vast plain which represented to me the outer world. I congratulated myself on having been able to escape from it and felt that in these high altitudes I had come closer to God, and to the child whose loss I mourned.

Needs must, I was obliged to return to that outer world. My fate decreed it. I accepted that fate, but not without regret, and how far I still was from resignation. My husband insisted upon a reconciliation. I could no longer refuse but I shrank from all the difficulties which I had not now the strength to endure*. To give myself courage I said to myself over and over again "The more you suffer the sooner you die, and at least you will have performed your duty to the end!" But I had not enough self mastery to hide from my husband a sort of fear, and even repulsion, that I felt at our reunion. He longed for it so, and was so happy about it that our reconciliation took place at Toulouse.

We returned to Paris by short stages through Southern France. Our only companions were Madame de Broc and Monsieur Lasserre, our physician. We maintained the strictest incognito, a thing which allowed us to see all the points of interests in the different towns through which we passed.

I visited the College of Sorrèze and the pool of Saint Ferréol, where two streams flow in different directions and form that Canal du Midi, which unites the two seas. At Nîmes I admired in detail some architectural remains of the Roman occupation. At Avignon I was shown the

* See Note p. 277

atrocities were committed during
 was a new reason to be grateful
 ing put an end to so much civil



the town in which the inhabitants
 crowd unhitched our horses and
 the streets with all the enthusiasm
 who would have dared predict that
 so enthusiastic for the Empire,
 a Marshal of France would be
 of the Emperor himself in danger?
 of the mob amounts to, and
 it knows best how to acclaim its

of Lyons, and I felt I could not
 fatigue. It was in August. The
 solely and my husband's indifference
 that I had not much to hope from
 heart. Such a love as he declared
 seem compatible with his lack of
 gaining courage I lost heart more

American war planes, provided through
 lease, are in action on the various
 ing fronts. Lend lease twin engine
 bers are shown (above) being hoisted
 ed ship in an unnamed American port
 a lighter alongside. They are bound
 distant Allied ports. More bombers in
 background are awaiting loading.
 rt welders fasten the big planes
 vely, to the ship's deck to protect
 ments from damage during heavy
 her at sea. (Below) A ground crew
 s a bomb through the bomb doors of
 ge Flying Fortress at an All American
 tional base in Britain

Cloud after nightfall. The court
 rical performance. My mother
 me. My son was brought to me
 im to my bosom, and the emotion
 ong those who were so dear to me
 ered all my feeling. I burst into
 e Emperor came into the room.
 exclaimed joyfully. After kissing
 "Come, come," he said gravely,
 of this childishness. You have
 n, it is becoming absurd. Do you
 of maternal devotion?*" You are
 ine, but other mothers are courag-
 e, like you, they still have beings
 you, they have duties to perform.
 , a kingdom which beckons you,
 s; I confess that I have not found



in you the fortitude that I looked for. What an idea to go off mountain climbing instead of remaining with your mother and your son! It was unfair to them not to turn to them for consolation, and had I been here I should not have allowed it. But here you are home; be cheerful, enjoy the pleasures natural to your age, and don't let me see another tear."

He withdrew after this reprimand, far from guessing how deeply he had hurt me. My tears dried, it is true, but only to give place to far more painful feelings. "So that is the Emperor's kind-heartedness," I said to my mother. "I thought better of him. It is clear that he has not the least idea of a mother's love! Heavens! How can he reproach my tears. I have scarcely shed any, and if he cannot understand my very natural emotion at finding myself once more among you, it is that he shuts every human feeling out of his heart. Is it possible that he does not understand them? No doubt the sight of my grief annoys him. So I do not ask to remain here. Let me go!" My mother tried to soothe me. "You don't understand the Emperor," she said. "He thinks you increase your grief by giving way to it unrestrainedly. He had already warned me that he should speak severely to you, because that was the only way to cure you. But you may rest assured that he shares our sorrow. He speaks of it very often to me, and it is just because he is so attached to you that he has seemed unfeeling."

My mother succeeded in attenuating the effect of the Emperor's words. But for a long time afterwards fear and a general sensation of discomfort came over me whenever he entered the room in which I happened to be. I could not say a word to him, and yet I must say he was most kind to me. When the time came for his daily drive, on which only my mother accompanied him, he made me go with them and talked about the things which he knew interested me, such as, for instance, the establishment of the school at Ecoven [for the daughters of the officers of the Legion of Honour], which was to be directed by Madame Campan. He appointed me the Royal Patroness of this future institution, and went into the details of the

plans in connection with it—a thing he hardly ever did. Then again, he would describe his interview with the Emperor Alexander at Tilsit. “He is a charming young man,” he always said at the end, “and I like him very much. As for the Queen of Prussia, she is handsome, pleasant in manner, but rather affected, and,” he would add, turning towards my mother and giving her a kiss, “she does not compare with my Joséphine.”

The Empress, seeing that he was trying to entertain me, would ask him questions in order to encourage him to keep up the conversation.

She asked him what the King of Prussia was like, and he gave a detailed and rather favourable portrait. “As for tact,” he would say, “what do you think of a prince who tells me, when I had just taken the province of Silesia from him, the well-known anecdote of Frederick the Great trying to take his shuttlecock away from him when he was a child and he refusing so obstinately that his uncle said : ‘ Well, I am glad to see that no one will ever make you give up Silesia.’ He was in a difficult position, I admit,” the Emperor would continue, “so he ought to have behaved with great dignity. I was working at the division of territory, with maps spread open in front of me. Whenever he felt that Prussia was not fairly treated he would tilt back in his chair and kick the underpart of the table, saying : ‘ How about me ? Will nothing at all be left for me ? ’ Then, too, he let his jealousy regarding the Emperor Alexander’s attentions for the Queen be seen a little too clearly. I once went riding with the Kings. Alexander had gone on ahead to overtake the Queen. The King of Prussia was unable to conceal his uneasiness, his eyes turned in all directions, and he exclaimed : ‘ Where can the Emperor of Russia be ? He has left us.’ And I, in a brotherly spirit, answered that he had been there a moment before and could not be far away.” In speaking of the Queen of Prussia the Emperor did justice to her beauty, but had not considered that her manner became a sovereign whose territories had just been invaded. In his opinion she made too great an effort to be agreeable, and her dress was overdone,

and therefore not in good taste. He said that a French princess in such a distressing position would have been richly dressed, but with affected indifference.

As for the King of Saxony, in the eyes of the Emperor, he was the best and most virtuous of men

CHAPTER VIII

LIFE AT THE EMPEROR'S COURT (1807—April, 1808)

At the Saint-Cloud Fair—A startling talk with Napoleon—Fouché suggests a divorce to Jos'phine—The surgeon of King Louis

A FEW days after my return to Saint-Cloud I knew that I was again to become a mother, and resolutely casting aside the gloomy thoughts which I had cherished so long, I reflected that my life no longer belonged to me alone, and that it was my sacred duty to preserve it. Another duty, too, sustained my efforts. I had again sworn to myself to do everything I could to bring happiness to him who seemed to repulse it.

I shared my mother's apartments, and my husband's rooms were on the lower floor. He seemed vexed by this arrangement, and I decided to move down beside him. He found life dull at Saint-Cloud and wished to stay in Paris, and to accompany him there I left my mother and my son, and overcame my grief at being in the midst of places which constantly recalled my loss. Insensible to my compliance, cold and self-centred, my husband rewarded me by neither word nor look. While we had been on our journey our physician had urged him either to advance or postpone the date of our return to Paris for fear lest our arrival there would occur at a moment when emotions might be dangerous to my health. Nothing could change Louis's plans. The carriage in which we drove daily to Saint-Cloud for dinner came from the imperial stables but was very uncomfortable, so much so that I was one day so badly jolted as to be in danger of

a miscarriage. I spoke to the King about it, asking him to allow me to stay that night at Saint-Cloud as I felt really ill. "You know how inconvenient that is to me," he replied shortly. This reply crushed me. It was so cruel that I felt it gave me the right to free myself from one set of duties in order to devote myself to another obligation.

As a crowning misery, the King wished to return to Holland, taking me with him. In vain my doctor declared that any journey was out of the question for at least another four and a half months. My husband, as though he could not understand these reasons, said that I was a better judge of what was good for me than my physician, and that I should be quite well in a fortnight. He repeated this statement until the moment of his departure, saying "I shall expect you in a fortnight."

How could he be so uncompassionate to his wife when he was kind enough to other people? During our last excursion I had seen him sympathize with the illness of the son of a poor peasant, have the sick boy cared for by his own doctor, and delay our departure in order to look after this utter stranger. Before we were married he frequently went without his private carriage in order to lend it to a young boy who was in poor health. It seemed as though I were the only being for whom he reserved all his harshness. And yet that was what he called *love*. Is it surprising that this word has always filled me with terror?

Madame de Broc left me in order to rejoin her husband, who wished for her company. All her personal feelings made her hope that I should return to Holland. Yet, eager as she had been for a reconciliation to take place between my husband and myself, she was now convinced that all hope for our future happiness together must be given up. As she loved me she could not see why I should submit to this new sacrifice after I had attempted to achieve the impossible. Consequently she implored me to stay in Paris for my confinement. "I will conceal nothing from you," she said, "I promise to tell you the truth about the King. If I again discover the suspiciousness and ill-will that

you can no longer put up with, if I hear him make any more statements which sully your reputation, I shall be the first to advise you not to return to him. Your life is necessary to your children, to your friends, and all who know you will know how to judge your conduct."

After my husband had left for Holland I stayed at Saint-Cloud. One day after dinner the Emperor said to me : "Go and put on your simplest gown and hat. Take your lady-in-waiting with you and we will pay a visit to the Saint-Cloud fair." The Empress had a headache and did not care to accompany us. I hastened back quickly to the drawing-room, but my Dutch lady-in-waiting took so long to change her dress that the Emperor tired of waiting for her, and we set out alone on foot. The Emperor gave me his arm. General Bertrand, who happened to be the aide-de-camp on duty, walked beside us. We soon reached the broad walk through the park which formed the centre of the fair. We kept some distance from the booths in order not to be recognized, for whenever a crowd caught sight of the Emperor he would be so surrounded and acclaimed that there was nothing for it but to hasten home. Often we have seen him return from a little walk almost carried by the populace, and swearing that he would never be caught again. On this particular occasion, as he had a lady on his arm, no one paid any attention to him. Moreover, night was coming on, and the crowd pushing its way towards the gates. We meanwhile continued to look at the sights of the fair. The *voiture nomade* caught our eye, and as we were out to see the sights we took the opportunity to investigate it.* While General Bertrand was paying for our admission the Emperor began talking to the showman about the usefulness of his machine and embarrassed him greatly by the directness of his questions. When we came out the crowd crushed us so much that the Emperor feared for me, and hastened to take me into the first tent we came across. It happened to contain an exhibition of figures representing the signing of the Peace Treaty at Tilsit. Seated at a large table were figures representing the Emperor of Russia and the Emperor Napoleon, and for what reason I cannot tell,

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* See Note p 277.
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there had been added figures of the entire Imperial family, which had no doubt been used on other occasions. There was also the Sleeping Beauty reclining in a corner. There was hardly anyone present to admire all these masterpieces, nevertheless the showman delivered his usual lecture, and we heard ourselves described one after the other. We were about to leave when we noticed that General Bertrand had not come into the tent with us. The crowd had separated us from him, and as neither the Emperor nor I ever had any money on us we both were much embarrassed. The situation seemed so new and so odd that I could not help laughing, and my hilarity was increased by the Emperor's embarrassed manner. The more uncomfortable he looked the more I wanted to laugh. There was nothing to be done but to wait patiently for General Bertrand to find us. In order to pass the time we examined the warworks more closely. I questioned the man in charge about each of the different portraits, and he assured me they were all excellent likenesses, and particularly praised that of the Queen of Holland, which seemed to attract my attention. It was true the complexion was delicately coloured, and the face quite charming. Indeed, I must confess that he had given my name to the most attractive of his figures. Nevertheless her head-dress was in such bad taste that I felt rather ashamed. I ventured to advise the showman to change the position of a string of pearls that fell over one eye, and that gave her a far from refined expression. As a result of my comments he set about adjusting her coiffure according to my indications, and did so with such gravity that the Emperor was not able to keep serious over what he called a piece of feminine vanity on my part. Even the showman himself began to laugh. But it was time for our fun to cease, as the Emperor began to be rather impatient. If General Bertrand did not put in an appearance it was evident that we should be obliged to reveal our identity in order to escape from our predicament. Before doing so, however, I hit upon the idea of standing by the door, where the General could see me from a distance. I was less likely to be recognized than the Emperor. The General finally did catch sight of me. He had been looking

for us anxiously everywhere. He hurried up all out of breath and allowed us to make our escape. We hastened to return home and amused the Empress greatly by our account of our adventures. Such moments of merriment, however, were rare indeed, and I had difficulty in escaping from my worries and fortifying my health which continued to decline.

The Court moved to Fontainebleau. I suffered so much that I was obliged to make the journey by water. My condition had become much worse since the ball* given by the Grande Duchesse de Berg in honour of the marriage of Prince Jérôme, when the Emperor, in spite of my refusal, which he attributed to my mourning, had forced me to dance. The Court's stay at Fontainebleau was enlivened by all sorts of amusements. In the morning there would be hunting expeditions in the forest or lectures on physics by the famous professor Charles. In the evening there would be either a play, concert, or dance in the apartment of the Empress or in those of the Princesses. I was excused from taking part in the hunting parties and occasionally would go and paint in the forest near the palace. In the evening I held a reception or I went to my mother's apartment. Many foreign princes visited the Imperial court. Those I saw the most frequently were the Prince of Baden, the Prince of Cobourg* and the Princes of Mecklenbourg.* One of the latter interested me particularly, because he had just lost his wife, sister of the Emperor of Russia, and was overcome with grief. As I rarely went out and was obliged to remain more and more on my sofa, everyone was kind enough to come and take tea with me and change my thoughts a little.

My husband wrote rarely. He accused me of not having kept my word, because two weeks after his departure from Paris I had not appeared in Holland. Consequently he no longer spoke of my return, but demanded that his son be sent to him. The child was extremely delicate, and the doctors declared that the Dutch climate would not agree with him. This was a cause of new troubles and anxieties for me. To send him to a place where his health would be in danger was a frightful thought. I

* See Note p 278.

explained all my reasons to my husband, I sent him all the reports of the physicians, but he had made up his mind, and I soon found myself in the sad necessity of yielding.

The Kingdom of Westphalia had just been created and Jérôme with his wife went to Cassel, the new capital. The Princess of Baden returned to her husband at Mannheim, and the Grand Duchess of Berg and I were left alone in the midst of a brilliant court. The annoyances and vexations of daily life exist at court as they do elsewhere, and are still more disagreeable there by contrast with the stately setting.

The glorious Peace of Tilsit had restored order and prosperity. All hopes seemed to have been realized, but those on whom the Emperor had conferred power and wealth showed uneasiness*. They looked into the future and complained that the Empire had no stability. For the first time the word divorce was spoken aloud, but as the Emperor had not said a single word about it, the friends of the Empress attributed all that was said to the hostility of certain individuals.

Having been asked by my husband to present some petition to his brother, I asked for and obtained an audience. It was at a time when the King was sending many Frenchmen back from Holland, especially the soldiers of his body guard. The Emperor was displeased and out of temper with him. He let me see this plainly. I attempted to soothe him, as I usually succeeded in doing. I begged him to allow Frenchmen to wear the Order of Holland, which Louis had recently created, and thus recognize the existence of this order. The Emperor declared that as far as he was himself concerned he would never wear it because the King had instituted it at a time when he had advised him not to do so. A few days later he granted one of the ministers, Mollien, permission to wear the decoration. I also spoke about my husband's wish to have his son with him in Holland and the danger, as to the effects of the climate on the child's health owing to his frail constitution. This was his answer:

'His father asks for the child, who is no longer even years old, so I have no the right to refuse him. He is

the only boy in the family. If he goes back to Holland he will die like his brother, and the entire French nation will push me to a divorce. People have no confidence in my brothers, who are all ambitious for that matter. Eugène does not bear my name, and, in spite of my efforts to restore peace, after me there will be complete anarchy. A son of mine can alone set things right, and if I have not yet divorced, my affection for your mother has alone prevented me, for all France is anxious that I should do it. This was obvious at the time of your son's death. Everyone believed that I was his father. You know how absurd such a supposition was. Well, it was impossible to prevent all Europe thinking the child mine." He stopped at my movement of surprise, and then went on : " The public did not think the worse of you ; you are generally esteemed. But they believed it." After a pause he continued : " It was perhaps just as well to have people think it, and so I looked upon his death as a calamity."

I was so amazed that, as I stood beside the fireplace, I was not able to utter a word, and I could not hear what he was saying either. The remark, " It was perhaps just as well that people should think so," seemed to tear a veil from my eyes. It caused a turmoil in my brain, and above all it struck straight at my heart, more cruelly bruised than all the rest of me. What ! while he had been treating me as his daughter, while it had seemed so simple and natural to look upon him as a father who took the place of the one I had lost, all his attention, his solicitude, was the result of a deliberate plan and not of spontaneous affection ! The thing that is dearest to a woman, her reputation, far from being defended by her natural protector, had been sacrificed for reasons of State ! Those marks of an affection the Emperor had bestowed on me and which I had considered both precious and gratifying had turned against me, proof of my shame in the eyes of the world ! Public opinion had condemned me, and what I had accepted as the expression of well-merited respect was no doubt only the self-interested language of flatterers. Instead of being surrounded by friends, the people about me were perhaps courtiers seeking the favour of the mother of the Emperor's

heir I had been an instrument by which every ambition had hoped to gain its ends! Ah, how dreadful it is to have one's illusions shattered so rudely! Yet I admit, this first movement of indignation passed off quickly. Harm that comes from others and to which we are not consenting strikes us, but is powerless to inflict deep wounds. My heart was pure and I knew that truth does not dwell in the courts of monarchs, and that the theatre of ambition is not the home of sincerity or rectitude. Only I deplored my lot.

Since that time I have often reflected over this conversation with the Emperor, and having grown to understand his character better, I have come to believe that the words I took so seriously were merely spoken as a passing whim, and I am convinced that he never could have fostered a report as damaging to his reputation as to mine. He had enough enemies who sought to slander him without trying to help them. The verses printed in reply to an English newspaper attack, which I had asked Bourrienne to explain to me shortly after my marriage, were proof enough that he did not wish any discreditable reports about my conduct to be put into circulation. At the moment, however, I did not reason so clearly and for a long time I was prejudiced against the Emperor on account of this conversation.

The word divorce had also struck me, so I was less astonished later when my mother told me that the Minister of Police, Fouché, had come to tell her that all France wished the Emperor to divorce, and that sooner or later the Emperor, who had not thought of it so far, would be obliged to yield to public opinion. Fouché even went so far as to show my mother the rough draft of a letter he advised her to write the Senate, and tried to persuade her to take the first steps in the matter of this separation. Up to this time divorce had seemed to me entirely out of the question, but the memory of this conversation with the Emperor made me fear that he was already acquainted with Fouché's proposals. The Emperor could not make up her mind what to do, and I did not discuss her in regard to so delicate a matter. Yet when she called

me to give an opinion I told her that if I were in her place I would go to the Emperor, reproach him for treating me in this roundabout way, and pray him to express himself clearly. If he showed that he wished for a divorce I would not stay with him another day. At the same time I took care to advise my mother to follow her own feeling, for her tender affection for the Emperor might cause her to disagree with my point of view. And indeed, after having conferred at length with her various ladies-in-waiting, and especially with Madame de Rémusat, friend of Monsieur de Talleyrand, in whose judgment she had great confidence, the Empress decided to reply to Fouché that she would not take any step. She did not speak to the Emperor either, but he was soon informed of the advice Fouché had given the Empress. He reproached my mother for her reserve, and assured her that Fouché had acted on his own initiative, and not on his (the Emperor's) behalf. For all that, he questioned the Empress as to what she thought about the matter. She replied that she would never take the first steps to bring about a change which would separate her from him, and that their destiny had been so extraordinary that it had certainly been directed by Providence, so that she believed she would bring misfortunes on them both if, of her own accord, she sought to separate her life from his. The Emperor showed feeling and resumed the affectionate attitude towards her he had always had in the past, and the project seemed forgotten. Yet the incident left a sad impression in my mother's heart. Talk as to a possible divorce was going on all over Paris, and was repeated to her so constantly that she had no peace of mind, and I often wondered if one ought not to regret for her that the divorce was not already an accomplished fact.

The Emperor left for Italy. While there he conferred the title of Prince of Venice on the Viceroy. This title was that of the heir to the Italian throne, and Eugène's new honour aroused much comment. I did not know what to think and began to believe that the question of a divorce had never been seriously entertained by the Emperor.

During the Emperor's journey to Italy my mother

often came to see me, for I was now back in Paris, unable to leave my sofa.

The princes whom I had received informally at Fontainebleau continued to attend my evening receptions regularly, until the Emperor's return put an end to this intimacy. He was very severe regarding the manner in which foreigners were to be received, and declared they should only be admitted to formal receptions. Prince William of Prussia had just arrived and as Prussia had endless protests to make, people supposed that his presence was the cause of this severity. Meanwhile the princes, nettled at being kept at a distance, frequented the drawing-rooms of the Faubourg Saint-Germain, where they heard the Emperor belittled in a manner which was no doubt more in accordance with their personal feelings. One day the Emperor, when blaming me for having received them, had said "Are there not enough agreeable Frenchmen in the world without having recourse to foreigners who can never like us? But of course they have such good manners and ladies always like to be pleasant to everyone."

Nothing more was said about the divorce, but everything showed me that the Emperor was torn between a desire to have a son and heir and a reluctance to separate from the woman whom he loved and who had always been so devoted to him. A few days before he left for Bayonne I went to his salon to say good-bye.* My mother was just leaving the room. The Emperor was seated and seemed preoccupied. As he saw me enter he did not stir, but looked at me closely without saying a word. The time for my confinement was very near. Suddenly he exclaimed "It hurts me to see you like that. How I should love your mother if she were in your condition!" Then he again lost himself in thought until the Empress returned. This preoccupation, the sudden exclamation that had escaped him, all seemed to me to prove that he was obsessed and tortured by the idea of separation. Nevertheless, he left with my mother for the South of France, and she felt happy and secure on the journey and while he was at Bayonne, where his attention was wholly absorbed by negotiations with Spain.

* See Note p. 27*.

Thus I was alone in Paris, a prey to all my mental anguish without any consolation ; without any society to change my thoughts except that of my ladies-in-waiting and the officers of my household. I was convinced that my confinement would be the end of my life, and felt no fear at its approach.

I had become very fond of my surviving son. His delicate health claimed my constant care, but his father's wish that the boy should join him in Holland frightened me and made me foresee new misfortunes. The child fell dangerously ill of a tertian fever. In spite of my own weakness I did not leave his bedside, and realized all too well that another loss might still be in store for me.

As had been agreed, Adèle wrote to me when occasion offered, and sent a faithful account of what went on in Holland in regard to me. My husband had not been able to prevent public prayers being offered up for my recovery, but before the whole Court he said biting things about me which cut my poor Adèle to the heart. Often at this period he would talk about me to her, telling of the violent love with which I had inspired him, and that I was the cause of the unhappiness of his life. He always wished to put me in the wrong, but could only invent imaginary grievances. His unfortunate disposition made him constantly rake up new grounds for suspicion to embitter his feelings. One day he sent for his surgeon, who was dexterous in his art, but rough and without the least breeding. "I count on you," the King said, "to do me a great service. They urge me to go to Paris to be present at the Queen's confinement. Perhaps they want to deceive me. I have a notion that she is already delivered. You could surely be able to tell if her pregnancy is simulated, and you might present yourself as if you had been sent to bring my son back with you." On leaving the King the surgeon confided in Monsieur de Broc, whose wife promptly let me know these details, advising me to welcome the man and to neglect no means of letting him convince himself of the truth, so that on his return to Holland he might reassure my husband and calm his ever-increasing distrust. Her letter was sent to me in a shoe,

which the surgeon brought with him little guessing what it contained. Imagine my state of mind on learning to what humiliation my husband subjected me. From that day on my mind was made up, I would never live with him again.

I was at my son's bedside, very excited by what Madame de Broc had written when the surgeon was announced. "Come in, Monsieur," I said. "Look at me well and you can tell the King in what condition you have found me."

The man stammered, attributing his mission to my husband's ill health and naturally suspicious cast of mind. Then he went back to Holland and told the King what had taken place. Louis, unable to believe that anyone could have betrayed him, sent for Monsieur de Broc and declared I must be mad to have said such things to the surgeon.

CHAPTER IX

THE BIRTH OF NAPOLEON III (April 1808-1809)

Birth of Charles-Louis-Napoleon—Monsieur de Talleyrand comes to call—Caroline's confession—Joséphine's debts—The Emperor of Russia—Hortense and her talismans—Her intervention on behalf of Talleyrand—Madame de Metternich

IN the night between the 20th and 21st April, 1808, I gave birth to a son.* I should have preferred a daughter, but the announcement that the baby was a boy caused my mother great joy, and the Emperor ordered a salute to be fired all along the Spanish frontier, where he then was. The birth of a second possible heir to the throne fitted in admirably with his political plans. I had sent my French Chamberlain, M. de Villeneuve, to convey the news to him, at the same time sending my Dutch chamberlain, Count Bylandh, to inform my husband. The King had the event announced to his subjects from the palace balcony and received the customary congratulations. I learned later that the surgeon had said in the drawing-room : " Queens have the right to be brought to bed sooner than other women, they never count like anybody else."

My son was so weak that I feared I should lose him at his birth. They were obliged to bathe him in wine and wrap him up in cotton-wadding to keep him alive. I did not care whether I should live or not ; my gloomy forebodings concerning the future made the idea of death quite bearable. In fact, so convinced was I that my last hour had come that I asked my accoucheur* whether I should live through the day. He could find no cause for my condition, which grew worse steadily.

* See Note p. 278.

A visit from Monsieur de Talleyrand added to my nervous agitation. He was one of those who had to sign the birth-certificate. He always wore his hair powdered, and the scent of the powder was so strong that, when he came close to me to express his good wishes, I was almost suffocated. I did not dare to say anything while he was there, but I felt very ill.

My moral suffering added to the serious state of my health. Queen of Holland, French princess, mother of two princes, sole heirs to the most glorious throne of Europe, I spent my days in loneliness and grief. How often did I envy the lot of private individuals surrounded by family and friends, who can be cared for and consoled without attracting the curiosity of strangers. But sovereigns have no family. Mine was scattered, my brother settled far away, my mother absent, and my husband's jealous nature had estranged all my old friends. No one was left to comfort me and sympathize with my troubles. Condemned to lie on a couch, my only amusement was to sing to the accompaniment of my guitar, and perhaps I made too free use of that mild recreation, for my chest became so delicate that singing was forbidden me, and I had to resign myself to seeing my faculties dwindle while my sad fancies conjured up imaginary ills in addition to my real ones.

At one time the grave anxieties caused by the continued weakness of my new-born child plucked me out of this slough of despond. The baby nearly died. His nurse had to be changed, and I myself went to a village to look for a new one. A few days later I paid the price of this brief revival of energy due to my maternal anxiety, and it cost me dearly, as I took a chill while caring for my son and had the most fearful pain in my head. Incredible as it sounds, I loved this physical pain, which gave me a moment's respite from my moral suffering. To crown my misfortunes, the Emperor's family took exception to my prolonged sojourn in France, and my husband's mother said openly that I had abandoned her son when he was ill, unhappy and unable to live without me. The thought of a return to Holland made me shudder. Yet if I did not go back to the

public, who could not judge my motives, would overwhelm me with the unjust severity of its judgment,

One day Madame Campan came to see me. She understood my character and guessed how miserable I was. "Don't let yourself pine away," she said to me with tears in her eyes. "I know how discouraged you are, but one must face life as it is. Live on, and in the end you will be better known and more fairly judged." What good could such advice do to a broken spirit?

Affairs in Spain were becoming serious. The Prince of the Asturias had seized the throne from his father. The Emperor summoned both father and son to Bayonne. My mother has often told me how the parents gave vent to their fury, with a vivacity and show of hatred such as our Northern and more controlled natures find difficult to understand. The father took a sort of delight in giving up his crown as long as it should not pass to his son. It was, in fact, bestowed on Joseph, who was then King of Naples.

Consequently the throne of Naples became vacant. Caroline set off for Bayonne there and then, and returned soon afterwards proud and triumphant at being Queen of Naples. I could not understand her satisfaction. She had been happy in her own country with her husband, free from the cares of state and the obligations of authority, rich, surrounded by everything that can insure comfort for oneself and confer it on others: she consented to give up all that for a crown, and she seemed glad! In truth, we must seek happiness in the harmony between our nature and our destiny.

To revert to the question of my sojourn in France. My children's life and their mother's reputation were at stake. I must take care of them and make my position clear to a few lofty spirits by whom I would be judged. The inclination against which I had fought so hard now seemed to me transformed into a tender friendship, a feeling of which my heart had need, and which could console me for the unjust opinion people were beginning to have of my conduct. Who knew me better than the man I had loved so much? Who could better appreciate me than

he whom I had so long avoided despite the strength of my affection? Since the last campaign he had remained in Germany. There was now no more fighting. I felt no uneasiness about him. He sympathized with my misfortunes, and had written to me several times, and now, on his way to take the waters in the Pyrenees he passed through Paris. In him I found the same kindness and the same esteem for me as of old, and I believed that I could put my trust in friendship, for it was in this sentiment that I sought consolations for the affection that I failed to find elsewhere. And so I did not hide from the man who seemed worthy of my confidence, my sorrows, my discouragement, and the hopes which I placed in him.

"Friendship," I told him, "is the noblest sentiment the human heart can conceive. Anyone can be a lover, but how many people know how to remain friends? Do not fear to confide in me your affection for another woman. I insist that you do so. I am sure of myself, I can bear my grief and yours, too."* Monsieur de F only remained a few hours in Paris.

The impulsiveness with which I yielded to an emotion which I believed to be pure inflamed my imagination, and I was preparing new tortures for myself when the truth should dispel my illusion. But as yet I did not discern the truth. I rested on the promise of mutual trust, then, too, my resolution of forgiving much dispelled the fear of ever being deceived.

One day I went to see Caroline, whom I found in the midst of preparations for her departure for her new kingdom. She hurried about, now inspecting her travelling carriages, then coming back to speak to me, dashing off to give an order with a smile or, the next instant, shed a tear.

"Hortense," she said to me at last, "I must confess to you my grief at leaving France, in spite of the crown which Fate has placed on the head of my children. You have never guessed at my affection for Monsieur de Flaubert. How often have I feared that he might have a tenderness for you! You are the only woman in the world I was afraid of. He seemed to distinguish you, but I was soon

* See Note p. 278

reassured. Young though he was and thoughtless he could never love anyone but me. No one can feel a second time the feelings I aroused in him, and, had it not been for my duties and my love for Murat, I do not know whether I should have had strength to deny him. I dread the grief that my departure will cause him ! It may be he will try and console himself in your company ; but promise me not to listen to him. He must remain faithful to me, as he cared for me so much. And I could not think without pain that another woman might please him."

I had let her speak without interrupting her. My breath failed me. Part of what she was telling me I already knew, but it seemed as though I was hearing it for the first time, so intense was my pain. I collected all my courage and replied: " Why should you fear me ? You know nobody is interested in me."

" You are the only woman I dread," she replied quickly. " I cannot tell how you do it, but you have the secret of attracting and rousing interest. There are women much handsomer than you are—myself, for instance. I know I am the prettier of us two, but you must have a charm of which I know nothing, because everyone is drawn to you. A thousand times I have tried to make Monsieur de Flahaut say he disliked you. He never would do so. It seemed when I spoke of you as though I were referring to some sacred being, but I know you and trust you. I saw him a few days ago, when he passed through Paris. The sight of a bracelet I was wearing upset him, for his love is as jealous as it is intense. Your name came into my mind, and I told him the bracelet was a present from you. Promise me when you see him again not to betray me." I promised and returned home in a state difficult to describe. Had the man who had sworn he was sincere been deceiving me ? I had just learned that another woman had been the object of his attentions at the very time when he had declared that I, and I alone, occupied his thoughts. True, I had asked only for friendship, but did that not entail complete frankness ? Made more wretched than I can describe by this cruel uncertainty, I did not know which way to turn. The consolation I had counted on was once again failing me.

Lonelier than ever, indifferent to everything, obliged to keep all my troubles to myself, it was no wonder that my illness became worse, became serious.

I often felt my interest in Monsieur de Flahaut revive. I said to myself "It is true that he deceived me, but perhaps he is very unhappy at the loss of the woman he loves, and if he really is deeply attached to her, how could he have spoken to me about her? The only wrong thing he did was to make me believe that I was his only interest, but as he is sad I must forgive him. I must not withdraw my friendship from him."

He came back to Paris before Caroline's departure, but only to leave again at once for the Spanish front. I was at Saint-Cloud at the time with my mother, who had come back from Bayonne. As soon as Queen Caroline had informed him of our conversation he wrote to give me the explanation. Caroline had told him that she had confided in me to put a barrier between us and added "I am sure that after our conversation Hortense will never love you, she is too romantic for that, and that was what I wanted, for it would grieve me deeply to hear that you are attached to her."

Monsieur de Flahaut wrote me these details and I believed him. He seemed sincere.* Perhaps, too, I wished to be deceived. Nevertheless, there remained a feeling of suspicion which quite destroyed my peace of mind. Henceforward no affection seemed to me sufficiently stable to be depended upon, yet how can one live without some such support?

My mother had come back from Bayonne. The change in my health alarmed her and she wished me to go and live with her at Saint-Cloud. Life there, although it had charmed me before my marriage because I found much with which to occupy my time, now wearied me on account of its futility and the need I felt of having occupations which would take my mind off my own troubles and give me something to do that was not directly connected with myself. Instead of that I was not left alone an instant. I spent the mornings in my mother's drawing room, where she worked at her embroidery, surrounded by her

* See Note p. 275

ladies-in-waiting. For hours on end I would sit beside one of these ladies watching her thread go in and out without being able to say a word or follow a line of thought. Every few minutes my mother would leave the room in order to receive some visitor or accept some petition that was presented to her. She did not dare leave the palace lest the Emperor should come by the balcony to fetch her, as he often did. It was his custom to walk with her between the completion of some piece of work and the meeting of his ministers. It was he who fixed the hour at which we were to go driving with him. We were always punctual, and almost always we waited an hour or even two for the council-meeting to be over. Finally the Emperor appeared, and hail, rain or shine we drove for several leagues round Saint-Cloud, often without the Emperor—his mind preoccupied with questions which had been before the Council or with some other important business—speaking a dozen words. After the drive we dressed for dinner, which we took alone, the Emperor, the Empress and I. Sometimes the conversation was no more lively than it had been during the drive. After dinner the Emperor returned to his work. The Empress played a game of whist in her drawing-room. I did not care for cards, but nevertheless played, too, until ten or eleven o'clock, when we all went to bed.

My husband had given up writing to me. He even returned several of my letters without having broken the seal, after having thrown them aside in the presence of his courtiers. He accused me openly of having wronged him by refusing to go back to Holland for my confinement, and as I was no longer there to excite his suspicions directly, his unhappy temper made itself felt by all around him. If the French courtiers who knew what our married life had been tried to defend me when my reputation was attacked they were at once dismissed as being spies, either in my employ or in the Emperor's.

The King had already received several sharp reprimands from the Emperor about the smuggling that went on between Holland and England.* The Emperor always considered subjects in their broad lines. The King on the contrary was only interested in minute details. A single

* See Note p 279
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careless phrase was enough to arouse his suspicion. The result was that the majority of the Frenchmen whom he had taken with him to Holland were dismissed for a word, for a doubt, but the dismissal was veiled as a special mission, or something of that kind—for instance, Monsieur de Caulaincourt was named ambassador to Naples. The others had different places. Monsieur d'Arjuzon, the King's High Chamberlain, became my first gentleman in waiting, Messieurs de Vaux and de Ville my equerries, so that in a short time I had so numerous a household that I did not know how to pay them all, reduced, as I was, to the allowance of a French princess, which was paid me by France.*

Monsieur Decazes, too, arrived with a letter from my husband appointing him my private secretary. I had already Monsieur Després, an elderly man, who had been with me for a long time and with whom I was thoroughly satisfied. This was the only occasion on which I refused to carry out my husband's wishes in regard to my household. And this is why a few days before I had left Caunterets, Monsieur Decazes, a fine-looking young man with excellent manners, arrived there. I received few visitors. He knew my reader and came to see her. Inconsolable over the loss of the charming young wife who had just died after seventeen months of married life, he was travelling to take his mind off his sorrow. The object of his journey made him interesting to us. He asked to be presented to me, and seemed too unhappy for anything to be refused him. He wished me to obtain a post for him at my husband's court, and I advised him to get a presentation when he returned to Paris through his father-in-law, Monsieur Muraire, who was President of the Court of Appeal.

This was done, and my husband appointed him his secretary and sent him off immediately to Holland. I had seen him only twice, but one day someone belonging to the Murat household said pointedly, "The Queen of Holland saw a great deal of a certain young man while she was taking the waters, and secured a post for him at her husband's Court." I could not imagine that this bit of spiteful gossip referred to anyone I knew as slightly as I

* See Note p. 270.

knew Monsieur Decazes. But when Monsieur Decazes returned from Holland to be my private secretary, the remark came back to my mind, and I declined to accept him. One day the Queen of Naples, who saw him at my house, said : " Can you believe that that young man is said to please you ? And Fouché says that he boasts of having been very well received by you." Greatly astonished that the Chief of Police, instead of telling me a thing that concerned me, should talk of it to persons who he knew well would be glad to find flaws in me, I asked him myself to explain such an absurd remark. He seemed confused, spoke of the young man's conceit and of the necessity of warning me of gossip that harmed my reputation.

In order to clear up my doubts on the subject I told Monsieur Decazes of the boasts attributed to him, thinking that he would be deeply pained at such gossip. He defended himself more or less vigorously, but a satisfied smile showed that his vanity was rather flattered. After that he never appeared in my presence except when he came with messages from my husband, who on learning that I had refused to take him into my Household honoured him with his complete confidence.*

I soon found out the source of the tittle-tattle so skilfully diffused. By the treacherous pains taken to sully everyone connected with the Empress I recognized the hand of Fouché, one of the most ardent partisans of the divorce. He would not spare any member of the family he wished to get out of the way. My brother could not be attacked ; but I, how was I to escape from the toils of a minister so intriguing and so well placed to produce evidence in support of his accusations ? A woman is always defenceless. The public knew the esteem the Emperor had for me. He had shown it on every possible occasion. There was no means of changing his opinion and that of the general public so simple as to declare that I was involved in some liaison that did not exist. This manœuvre and many others were necessary to Fouché to sustain his policy of a divorce which France in general did not want. My mother was too popular : kind, generous, amiable, accessible to everyone, always ready to help anyone in trouble

* See Note p. 279.

and to intercede, no one could dream of finding anyone better than she, and public interest in her was now increased by the fear of losing her.

The Emperor, aware of her popularity, hesitated, and it was to overcome his indecision that intrigue set all its machinery to work. A great deal was said about the Empress's enormous debts, but it was her kindness of heart that made her incur them and it was misfortune that had benefited by them. The public who saw the extent of her generosity loved her the more for the difficulties in which it involved her. But the Emperor, passionately fond of order, was inexorable in this respect. The end of the year was always a most painful moment for my mother, crushed beneath the weight of debts, debts which she had allowed to accumulate through fear of confessing the prodigality with which her husband reproached her so often. The Emperor began by being angry and ended by paying. But the police found a way to revive his displeasure by indicating that the Empress had hidden half that she owed. Thus by sowing dissension they prepared the way for disunion.*

I was still living at Saint-Cloud when the Emperor left for Erfurt,* where all the reigning princes of Germany, as well as the Emperor of Russia were to meet him. I witnessed the tears my mother shed in thinking of this journey. The Emperor reassured her, saying that this gathering was purely political and had nothing to do with the projects for an alliance that he was popularly supposed to entertain, and indeed the intimacy which existed at the time between the Emperor Napoleon and the Emperor of Russia led people to guess at a marriage between the former and the Grand Duchess Catherine.

The result of the meeting at Erfurt seemed to be a closer intimacy between the two Emperors. All sorts of little incidents were spoken of in illustration of it. For example, in a tragedy played by French actors, at the line

A great man's friendship is a heaven-sent boon.**

the Emperor Alexander* leaned towards the Emperor Napoleon and embraced him.

* See Note p. 272

I was completely ignorant of what was going on in the world and the Emperor liked to leave us in this ignorance, even when our dearest interests were concerned. I only learned the nomination of my elder son to the Grand Duchy of Berg* when the Master of Ceremonies wrote to my Maid of Honour asking when I would receive the visit of congratulation from the Senate. I sent my son to thank the Emperor and I received the congratulations without the smallest feeling of satisfaction, an indifference I can explain only by the extraordinary elevation of our rank, already so exalted that a duchy more or less did not make a great sensation. On the contrary I feared that this display of grandeur might give my son false ideas as to his place in the world, for I held so much to his having merits of his own that I constantly belittled fortune's favours, persuading him that he would never become anything except by his work and his good qualities. For my own part I sometimes felt sad at the thought of so many crowns united in our family with only my sons to inherit them. I imagined that they would be separated from me for ever, one ruling in the North, one in the South, and all the pomp and circumstance of royalty did not promise happiness either for them or for me.

After the council at Erfurt all the officers took the road to Spain. Caroline went to Naples and my mother and I accompanied the Emperor to Rambouillet whence he joined the army for Spain. The Empress was even more sad than usual on this occasion when she said good-bye to her husband.

"Will you never stop making war?" she asked him. And I remember how the Emperor answered: "Well! do you think that I enjoy it? Don't you think I would rather stay peaceably where I have a good bed and a good dinner instead of facing all the hardships I have before me? You think I am made differently from other men? There! I can do other things besides wage war. But needs must. I owe a duty to France. It is not I who direct the course of events. I obey it."

This war began under such unfavourable auspices that everyone was vaguely uneasy about it. The officers

* See Note p 279

did not hasten to it with the martial zeal we had seen so often. They only obeyed orders and no one saw the departure of his loved ones without a gloomy presentiment. Perhaps this was particularly true in my case for, being ill, I was inclined to exaggerate all misfortunes.

It was the fashion just then to collect engraved Turkish jewels and I had a large number of them. I imagined that a seal given by me might act as a talisman, at least I liked to persuade myself of this in order to give a great many of these little keepsakes, so as to be able to send one in particular. Moreover, I said to myself "Why should not my lot have some compensation? If I am unhappy, let me at least bring good luck to others, and then I shall not complain of my fate." I gave seals to all the Emperor's aides-de-camp, recommending them to wear them constantly if they wished to be preserved from danger.

When one's feelings are roused the smallest things become important. Several young wives who worshipped their husbands, came and asked me very seriously for one of my Turkish talismans and, as it happened, almost all those who wore them came through every danger. I grew to attach a superstitious importance to something that at first had been merely a whim, and after this time I sent a talisman to my brother at the beginning of each new campaign and I should, perhaps, have worried myself if he had not worn it.

The Emperor, before he left, had expressed his desire to see me return to Holland. After all I had endured I thought it inhuman to oblige me to go back to a man who had made me so unhappy. My distress made me unjust, for I should have remembered that I was only the Emperor's stepdaughter, whereas my husband was his brother, that he could not side with me without attacking Louis and that he had already done a great deal for me by allowing me to remain so long in Paris when my father was in Holland. Doubtless it was on account of my children that the Emperor allowed me to remain so long in France in spite of all the efforts of my husband's family.

One day I received the visit of Grand Marshal d

Broc who brought me word of a thing I had long suspected. My husband's Minister of Justice was Monsieur Van Maanen. The King sent for him and gave orders to have everything possible done to discredit me in the eyes of the public. These were the instructions Monsieur Van Maanen received : " Spread reports that the Queen dislikes Holland intensely, that she is amusing herself in France and that her conduct there is not at all becoming." The Minister drew back in astonishment and said : " But, sire, it is a question of your wife and Queen of Holland, I cannot do such a thing as that." " You are right," replied the King in some embarrassment, " I was merely testing you." And next day the Minister was dismissed.

How could I believe that passion could so blind an upright man and lower him to the point that he would act in such a way towards the mother of his children? I tried to doubt these stories. I chose rather to suppose that the Minister made a false report than believe such abject conduct of my husband, but at the bare thought of a reconciliation, my heart sank.

Since the Emperor's departure my mother had been living at the palace of the Élysée. He had decided that French citizens raised to foreign thrones should no longer receive stipends in France. Consequently I had no allowance with which to pay the expenses of my household and as I did not wish to beg of anyone I dismissed all my servants. I planned to live at the Élysée with my mother. This change of fortune was the least of my troubles. The Emperor heard what I had done and scolded me severely. He fixed my income at seven hundred thousand francs.

As the war had interfered with the prosperity of Paris, the trade in luxuries had decreased and many workers suffered from this stagnation. The Emperor, who knew how to attend to small matters as well as how to conceive great enterprises, had six thousand francs a month given me for distribution. His uncle, Cardinal Fesch, Madame Mère and the Princess Pauline received as much, and with what we each gave personally, it amounted to quite an important sum. As for me, I gave the utmost that I could

to relieve the suffering of the poor I did it quite naturally. There is no merit in so doing when one has a large fortune and high position. In those days it was not thought necessary to assure one's popularity by announcing such things in the newspaper. None of us dreamed of making a merit of what we did and the Emperor would not have liked it had we done so.

While the Emperor was busy with the war in Spain, Austria gave ground for uneasiness and obliged him to hurry back without having concluded the war, which assumed an alarming aspect. Monsieur de Talleyrand continued to look after this Spanish business in consort with the Emperor, even after he had left the Ministry of Foreign Affairs,* and was said to have advised the policy that was followed at first, but no sooner did he see how things were going than he began to laugh at a campaign which had not the brilliance to which we were accustomed.

One day Madame de Rémusat called on me. She came to tell me how much the reputation of Monsieur de Talleyrand had suffered with the Emperor by people repeating remarks he had never made and saying he had opinions which were not really his. She wept many tears as she spoke of this disfavour, and protested that she could not conceive what could have turned the Emperor against a man who was so absolutely devoted to him as was Monsieur de Talleyrand. She begged me to grant him an interview and to try to set him right with the Emperor. I remembered the flattering attention he had paid me while we were at Mayence, and that I had met him since and he had scarcely seemed aware of my presence. It was true, I had lost my son, and he was evidently one of those people who are frightened away by misfortune. Nevertheless, as one of the high dignitaries of the Court he had called on me when my youngest child was born and in his carelessly polite manner had said "It is your Majesty's business to give us Princes. We trust our future happiness to you." Since then I had never even heard him spoken of and, I confess, I was delighted to have the opportunity of revenging myself for this apparent neglect by doing him a service.

* See Note p. 279.

Monsieur de Talleyrand came a few moments after Madame de Rémusat had left. This conduct said everything, for he scarcely mentioned what he wanted me to do for him. He was no more cordial in his manner than usual and I seemed to be the one who was asking a favour. The tears of Madame de Rémusat and her eagerness to defend her friend's interest were in striking contrast with the indifferent air of that haughty personage. I promised to speak to the Emperor that same evening* and I believe that Talleyrand obtained my promise without having asked for it. Madame de Stael knew him well. Her portrait of him in the novel "Delphine"* under the name of Madame de Vernon, is a striking one, and I have on several occasions noted how closely it resembled the original.

In accordance with my promise I went that evening to the Tuileries and assuming a concerned manner, told the Emperor that I had seen a person who was bitterly grieved at having fallen from favour. I spoke of that person's devotion and of his despair; in fact, I lied so outrageously that I do not know how I managed to keep a grave face. When at length I mentioned the name the Emperor burst out laughing. "Oh, it is Talleyrand you are talking about, is it?" he exclaimed. "Do you mean to say he called on you this morning?"—"Yes, sire, and he was greatly distressed."—"So he thinks I have not been told of all his talk? He has been trying to glorify himself at my expense. I have nothing more to do with him. Let him chatter as much as he likes."—"But, sire, how can one put words into the mouth of a man who never says two words in succession? It can be nothing but gossip and slander."—"My child, you don't know the way of the world. I know what to believe. If he says nothing before you, he takes his revenge about two o'clock in the morning with his friends, Madame de Laval and the like. Besides, I do him no harm. Only I will not have him meddling any more in my affairs." I do not know whether my picture of Monsieur de Talleyrand's grief touched the Emperor, or whether there were other explanations between them. At any rate, a reconciliation

* See Note p 279

seemed to take place, though M. de Talleyrand was not allowed to hold office again, an exclusion wounding to his ambitious nature and which he never forgave. Even his post of Lord High Chamberlain was taken from him and given to Monsieur de Montesquieu. This made people say of the Emperor that he humiliated too much and did not punish enough.

Madame de Talleyrand, whom I knew very slightly, called one morning while her husband was still High Chamberlain. "Knowing how kind you are," she said, "may I venture to ask you to include Monsieur de Talleyrand among the persons whom you invite to play whist with you at the Emperor's reception? It is he who, as Lord High Chamberlain, arranges your table, who takes your commands to inform the persons with whom you wish to play, and it is painful for him, as one of the principal figures at Court, never to be chosen by any one of the princesses." I promised Madame de Talleyrand to do as she wished, and it was true that it had never occurred to any of us to ask Monsieur de Talleyrand to play, as we thought he was too busy doing the honours.

There were vague rumours of a new war with Austria, and what appeared at first sight an insignificant incident, caused us to believe these rumours were based on fact. When a Court was held after a theatre or concert there was always play. We went upstairs with the Empress to the Emperor's large study where our tables were set out. Generally the Emperor did not play, and we and the Empress gave the High Chamberlain the names of the persons who were invited to join us. It was usual that there should be the principal ambassadors of our great powers or the high court dignitaries. At the time of which I am now speaking the Emperor said with an apparently indifferent air to the Empress, "Who are your partners this evening?" and without waiting for a reply gave the names of three persons. He asked us the same question and also chose our partners. It was easy to guess that this was done to avoid having Monsieur de Metternich, the Austrian ambassador, who was always invited to play, at one of our tables. On this occasion he was

relegated to the rubber of the ladies-in-waiting. Just as Madame de Talleyrand had turned to me, Madame de Metternich now came to beg me to manage in such a way that her husband should not be invited by the ladies-in-waiting, for if he could not take part in our game he preferred not to play at all, to avoid calling attention to his changed position. I gladly did as Monsieur de Metternich wished. Indeed I went further, and at supper, where we each had our own table and where only the ladies were seated, I took advantage of the fact that the Emperor had told us neither whom we were to invite nor whom we were to avoid, and made a point of asking Madame de Metternich to sit at my table every time there was a reception. Otherwise she ran the risk of being left severely alone, for the Emperor's disfavour was contagious and he was not accustomed to see anyone take the part of those he had abandoned. And so during the round of visits he made while we were at supper, he steered clear of my table without saying a word, as he saw that it was not composed to his liking. I resigned myself to this very easily. Indeed I rather enjoyed opposing him in this matter, for I thought it unfair that Madame de Metternich, who had never had anything to do with politics, should suddenly be neglected by everyone when a few days before the Emperor's disfavour towards her husband she had been so fêted. Courtiers are often in too great a hurry to prove their zeal for their sovereigns by going further than they do.

The Emperor, as his habit was, went away suddenly one evening without informing anyone.* He took my mother with him and she left word that I was to join her at Strasbourg and to remain there with her throughout the war. I set out a few days later accompanied by my two children, and before I had reached Lunéville I already heard of our first victory. Then as I entered Strasbourg the young page Oudinot came to the door of my carriage and announced another. Not a day passed without our seeing large detachments of prisoners guarded by a very few soldiers. As all our troops were at the front it often happened that when we drove beyond Kehl we would

* See Note p. 279

find ourselves alone without any escort in the midst of the prisoners. The idea that we might be in danger never occurred to us. I strolled about among them with perfect confidence and distributed money, especially to the cartloads of wounded. Marshal Kellermann, who commanded the garrison of Strasbourg, blamed me for taking such risks, especially as I was a member of the imperial family. But I lost nothing of my confidence, feeling sure that these defeated and unhappy men were interested only in their misfortunes.

The Queen of Westphalia, who had been obliged to leave Cassel, joined us, and so did the Princess of Baden. But as our stay at Strasbourg had further weakened my health, I allowed myself to be persuaded to try the waters of the little town of Baden whose picturesque situation and good air might do me good. And in truth I did regain a little strength there. My children were with me, and I was near enough to my mother (who had remained at Strasbourg) for me to be able to see her from time to time.

But when the Emperor heard that I was in Baden with my children, he wrote me a letter reproving me severely for having taken his nephews out of France without leave, and he advised me to send them at once to the Empress. I did so and a little later followed them myself.

The war was pushed on with energy. As peace was what we all longed for, we hoped after each new victory that the end was at hand. Having grown accustomed to successes our only anxiety was for the life of particular individuals. During this campaign I had more than one cause for interest and alarm. My brother commanded the army of Italy and we were chagrined to hear that Fortune had not favoured his first battle*. In a letter to my mother he expressed such keen disappointment that we feared that he would in the future expose his life to even greater dangers than those he had already run. Fortunately he soon retrieved this reverse by a brilliant campaign, beat the enemy every day and brought a triumphant army to join the Emperor on the banks of the Piave, just after the battle of Essling, which had sent

* See Note p. 272.

us so dear, and when this unexpected reinforcement was as welcome as it was necessary.

The Emperor did not hide his satisfaction. He went out to meet Eugène and embraced him tenderly in the sight of the entire army. When the Emperor had heard of the junction of the two armies he exclaimed : “ ’Tis with the heart that such things as this are done ! ”*

* See Note p 280

CHAPTER X

THE DIVORCE OF JOSEPHINE—THE MARRIAGE WITH MARIE-LOUISE—THE ABDICATION OF LOUIS (1809-1810)

A journey to Plombières—Return to Paris—The divorce is decided on—Arrival of Eugène and Louis—Fêtes at Paris—December 5th, 1809—With Joséphine at Malmaison—Madame de Metternich—Life at Court—The Emperor's dancing lesson—Arrival of Marie Louise—The Emperor's marriage—Hortense leaves for Holland—At the Palace of Amsterdam and the Château of Loo—Departure for Plombières—Louis abdicates and Hortense is made Regent.

THE Emperor's severe reproof having driven me from Baden, I went to take the waters at Plombières with my children. I had been there with my mother before my marriage and it seemed to me that I should find once more the health and gay light-heartedness of my youth, which had flown so far from me. Nature had remained the same it was I only who had changed, but although the waters did me good I could not recapture those first impressions which a heart that has known sorrow can never feel again.

My mother joined me at Plombières. It was there that we heard of the successful battles of Raab and Wagram.* The first, won by my brother's army corps, was announced to us by Monsieur de Labédoyère, who had been aide-de-camp to Marshal Lannes, and whom Eugène had attached to his staff after the marshal's death. My brother's continued successes were much commented on in the army. He was considered the only possible successor to the Emperor. During the armistice a young German student was arrested at a parade, when he was on the point of assassinating the Emperor.* The generals and other officers, alarmed at the idea of what might have happened, turned their attention once more to the absence

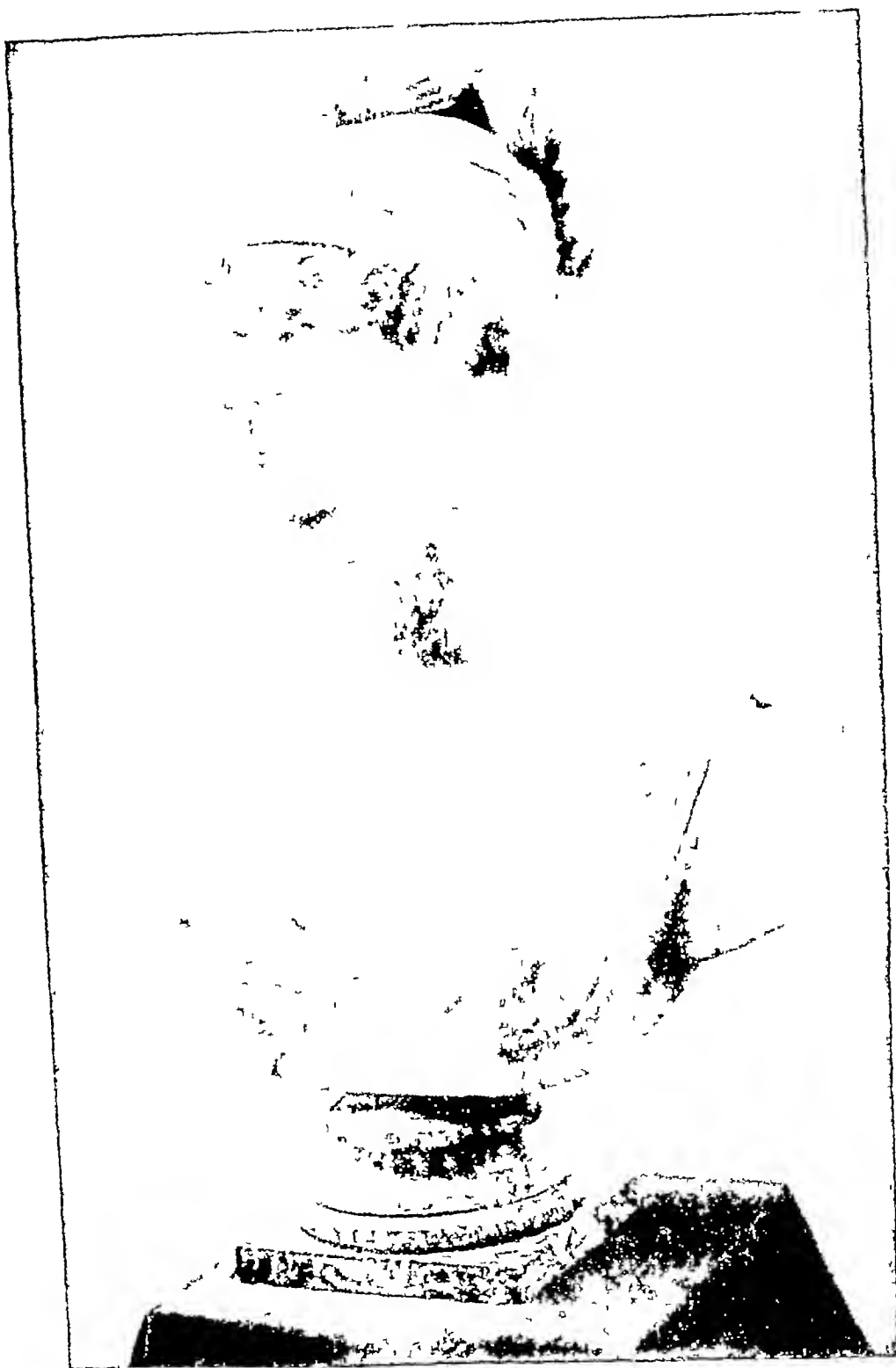
* See Note p. 250

Emperor's liaison with the Polish charmer. When she saw me she forgot that she had made a grievance of my absence. But Madame Mère gave me a very cold reception. Although I was accustomed to unfair treatment from the Emperor's family, I listened with surprise to the reproaches she made me for having let my mother come home alone, and staying on alone at a watering-place, especially as my husband was not with me. Who could have guessed that her own daughter, the Princess Borghèse, was alone at Aix-la-Chapelle? All that the others did was right, and all that I did wrong.

The Emperor arrived at Fontainebleau and sent us word to join him there.* My mother, instead of being delighted, felt her heart sink. However, her husband received her pretty well, while I had a very cold reception. I had written to him from Plombières asking permission to make an excursion into Switzerland. He had not answered me, so I had given up the idea. The first thing he said to me was, "You went to Switzerland without my permission?" It was useless for me to say no—he did not seem to believe me, and I could but think he must have received false reports from the Minister of Police, who persevered in his policy of hostility towards everything and everybody belonging to the Empress. Thus harassed in all sorts of ways, I might have fallen into my previous state of discouragement had not my mother needed me so badly.

The divorce was decreed in the mind of the Emperor. His only hesitation was as to the means he should employ. No more kindness, no more consideration for my mother. He had given her up. He became unjust and plagues. Our family seemed a burden on him and he sought the society of his own people. He devoted himself to the entirely, as though he were seeking to make us do what he did not as yet venture to exact. He did things he had never done before, such as driving out with the Empress, accompanied only by the Princess Borghèse with whom he spent almost every evening. It was then that a certain Piedmontese lady in the Princess's service was the reason for this strange assiduity.* But I believe

* See Note p. 250.



Marble bust by Basso

Belonging to Prince Napoleon

JOSEPHINE

that his conduct was rather an attempt to divert his mind from what lay before him and to steel himself against the pain of the separation he had resolved on. His mind was made up, but his heart still resisted, so he sought to occupy it elsewhere. It may be, too, that he was trying to prepare my mother.

So it was at Fontainebleau that the torturing anxieties of the Empress revived. This love intrigue carried on in the very midst of our domestic life added new fuel to the rumours of an approaching divorce. As for me, witness of my mother's constant tears and of the conduct that provoked them, my heart and my wounded pride were alike revolted. I wished that the divorce had already been pronounced. Neither the position of my family nor my children's future could weigh in the balance against the humiliating position in which we were now placed. "Only my brother and I have anything to lose," I said to myself. "He will be forced to resign the crown of Italy and my children that of France. But this sacrifice is worthy of us and our mother will be happier. Her career is over. Let us hope that her life may not be shortened by her sorrow! If only she could cease to care for the man who is making her suffer let us forget all the grandeur promised to us and think only of insuring our mother's peace of mind."

This was how things stood when we returned to Paris.* One morning the Emperor sent for me. I was out and when I came in he was at a cabinet meeting. I went in to see my mother and found her in tears.* She told me that the Emperor had at last informed her he could no longer live in this way and that he had decided on a divorce. "Well! so much the better," I replied at once. "We will all go away and you can live in peace."—"But you, my children, what will become of you?"—"We will go with you. My brother will feel as I do. For the first time in our life, far from the crowd, we can really know what it means to be happy." This resolute way of facing things and the plans I made for the future, to occupy her imagination, seemed to calm her feelings. When I left her she was resigned.

* See Note p 280
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That evening at dinner a page brought me word that the Emperor wished to see me. I went to him, as resolved as I had been in the morning not to display the least sign of weakness. A sort of pride seemed to uphold me. The Emperor came out of his study. His manner, abrupt at first, soon became animated. He said to me "You have seen your mother. She has spoken to you. My decision is made. It is irrevocable. All France desires a divorce and claims it loudly. I cannot oppose my country's will. So nothing will move me, neither prayers nor tears."—"Sire," I replied, in a calm, cold tone, "you are free to do as you think fit. No one will try to oppose you. Since your happiness exacts this step, that is enough, we shall know how to sacrifice ourselves. Do not be surprised at my mother's tears, it would be more surprising if after fifteen years of married life she shed none. But she will submit, I am convinced, and we shall all go, remembering only the kindness you have shown us."

While I spoke his face and expression changed. Hardly had I finished when abundant tears started from his eyes and in a voice broken by sobs he exclaimed "What! All of you leave me! You will desert me! Don't you love me any longer? If it were my happiness I would sacrifice it to you. But it is the good of France! Pity me rather for being obliged to sacrifice my most cherished affections."

At sight of this unfeigned emotion, my pride gave way. I forgot everything except that he was unhappy, and I wept too, and my one thought was how I could console him. "Do not lose heart, sire," I said, "we shall need all our courage at the thought that we are no longer your children. But I assure you we shall know how to be brave. When we leave you we shall think that by going away we remove an obstacle to your plans and your hopes." For a long time he protested against the idea of our leaving him, arguing that his action was entirely based on political grounds, and that my mother would always be his dearest friend, that he should not cease to consider my brother as his son but that as the same blood did not flow in their veins he could not make him

his heir, that the one way of assuring the future peace of France was to leave his throne to his own child, that he had realized this for a long time and that only his affection for his wife had prevented him from taking action sooner. "Do not believe," he said, "that Court intrigues could influence me in any way. On the contrary, at the time of the coronation, when I felt that there was a party hostile to your mother not only did I have her crowned but I also had her anointed, and at that time I hoped that by presenting my nephews as my heirs I should satisfy public opinion. But the men I had made powerful insisted that dynastic stability must be assured, and the mass of the people to whom I owe so much feel that I am the only protector of their strength and happiness. After me anarchy would break out again and the fruit of so many efforts would be lost to France. Instead of that if I leave a son brought up with my ideals, a son whom France will be accustomed to think of as my heir, the country will have the benefit of all I have done for her and will gather the fruit of my labours. The toil will have been for me, others will reap the reward. As for you, your children's interests, which are a mother's first consideration, should keep you here with me. So let me hear no more of your leaving me."—"Sire, my duty is towards my mother. She will need me. We can no longer live near you. That is a sacrifice that we must make. We are prepared to make it."

I returned to tell my mother of this interview. Every day brought new conflicts. I tried to persuade her to let us leave everything behind and follow her, but the Emperor always came afterwards and undid my work. Frequently my heart bled at the thought of leaving my children. I hoped to keep them with me at least until they should be seven years old and my imagination already pictured all the compensations for my sacrifice, which the intervening years might contain. I dreamed of a possible refuge far from the Court in the sweet seclusion of family life, with my mother enjoying the rest she had so long desired. Freedom from care would be my compensation for the sacrifice we had made. My brother's

future touched me more keenly. Knowing his character I could guess what his own conduct would be. But would his wife, brought up so near a throne, resign her position willingly? Would she not feel too keenly the loss of the high hopes she had held for the future?

The Emperor sent Eugène word by [optical] telegraph* to come to Paris. It was the first time he had returned to France since the day when, a mere Colonel of the Guard, he had left it with his regiment. I went to meet him, to tell him of the motive for his journey. Our carriages met at Nemours (December 5th, 1809), and he came into mine. After we had kissed, weeping with joy to see each other again, he said to me, "Is the cause that unites us pleasant or unpleasant?" I answered "Unpleasant," and he guessed the rest. His first words were "Has my mother courage to face it?"—"Yes"—"Well, then. We will all go away quietly and end our days more peaceably than we began them. But why did they marry me to a princess? My poor wife is the only one to be pitied. She had hoped that her children would wear crowns. She had been brought up to consider that important. She thinks that I have been sent for to be named heir to the throne of France. But she will be brave. She loves me so dearly and is so fine a character that she knows that if one does right one is never unhappy." All along the road as we travelled back together I told him everything that had happened in Paris since he had left. I had once more found a protector and a friend, so, forgetting for a moment the sad causes of his presence I gave myself up to the solace of pouring out all my troubles. He knew a good deal already, but when he found me so changed, he guessed what I must have suffered, and confessed that he should hardly have recognized me. And then he told me of the charm diffused over his own home life, of the constant harmony which sweetened all his long days of labour. How different our fate had been! The balance of fortune had always been on his side, yet his good fortune became all the dearer to me because I felt that, in some way, I had contributed to it by my sufferings. Far from complaining, I prayed Heaven

* See Note p. 230

to continue to send me all the misfortunes and to spare my brother.

We arrived at the Tuileries. Eugène went at once to see the Emperor and I returned to the Empress, who was much moved at the thought of meeting her son, whom she had not seen since Munich, when his future seemed so brilliant. She had never doubted that either he or my children would succeed the Emperor and all these hopes had suddenly vanished. She grieved solely on our account for, so far as she was concerned, she was already resigned and kept constantly in mind the thoughts that would strengthen her decision—the certainty of remaining the friend of the man she loved, of living in the same country with him, of seeing her life change into quieter ways, and above all of doing her share to secure the happiness of France and of the Emperor. She was determined not to go far away from him, and she waited anxiously to know my brother's opinion on this point which she feared might be the same as mine.

The Emperor and Eugène joined us by the private stairway. The meeting was a painful one. All eyes were full of tears. Even he who had seemed so unbending now seemed ready to revoke the wish he had asserted so strongly. But my brother and I assured him that the time for that was passed, that we knew what was in his mind, that the Empress could no longer be happy with him, that we had kept quiet as long as we could believe in a Court intrigue, or a family cabal, but that now that he had explained himself it was for us to have courage to leave him. The Emperor repeated to my brother what he had already said to me. According to him, it must be an amicable arrangement. The Empress would lose neither her position nor the feeling he had for her. My brother insisted that the separation be complete. "Otherwise we should be in a false position," he said. "In the end my mother might be in your way. People would attack our family thinking we had been dismissed. Our simplest actions would be judged as prearranged intrigues. Even your enemies would injure our good name by pretending to be our friends and so leading you to suspect us unjustly. It is

better to leave everything. Choose a place for us, far from the court and its intrigues, where we can help our mother to bear the weight of her misfortune.'

The Emperor protested against the poor opinion we seemed to have of him and said, speaking in a serious thoughtful way that showed he was deeply moved "Eugène, if ever I have been useful to you in your career, if you have looked upon me as a father, do not abandon me. I need you. Your sister cannot leave me either. She owes that to her children, my own nephews. Nor does your mother wish it either. With your exaggerated ideas you increase her unhappiness. Indeed I may say more, you must think of posterity. Stay with me unless you wish it to be said that the Empress was repudiated and abandoned, and that perhaps she deserved it. Is not her part far nobler if she continue to live near me, to keep her rank and position, thus proving that the separation was due to political necessities and that she willed it and thereby became more than ever entitled to the praise, love and respect of the nation for whose good she sacrificed herself?"

We did not know how to reply to these new arguments, as powerful as they were unexpected. We were won over by the Emperor's solicitude for his wife's reputation at the very moment he was leaving her. The conduct of the husband dictated the attitude of the children, they would have done wrong not to imitate it. Cost us what it might, we resolved to let our thoughts dwell only on the honourable position assured to our mother. Our wishes were subordinate to her interests. Already we were prepared to accept the new position which placed us on an equality with the crowd that we had seen at our feet, and reduced us to be of no account where we had been so influential. We made up our minds to accept everything.

Once the sacrifice had been decided upon, the only thing to do was to carry it out. The Emperor's family met, and their joy could not be hid, try as they would to conceal it. Grieved in appearance by the fate of the Empress, every time they turned towards us, of whom they

had always been so jealous, they betrayed themselves by their satisfied and triumphant manner.

I was constantly obliged to face several troubles simultaneously, and I now heard of my husband's return. The Emperor (doubtless in the hope of bringing about a reconciliation between Louis and myself) had urged me to write to him so as to decide something about our way of living. I did so. In reply I received a long review of all the misfortunes I had brought upon him, ending by the wish which he had and believed me to have too, that we should separate judicially.

After a luncheon* given by Princess Pauline for the Emperor at Neuilly, my stepfather called me over to him and, while the guests were all in the garden, slipped his arm through mine and led me a little away from the rest of the people, saying as he did so : " Your husband arrives to-morrow. I know he intends to live at his mother's house. I do not approve of that. Here in France I have the right to oblige him to go to his own house, but I know how unhappy his disagreeable temper makes you. Tell me : should you resent it if I ordered him to go to your home ? "—" Ah, sire," I exclaimed, " I have no more courage to bear torments so constantly renewed."—" Yet," he replied, " Louis is kind. It is true nobody can live with him, but that is because your gentleness lets his faults get the better of him. An honest woman should always rule her husband."—" Sire, I beseech you, let him do as he wishes." The Emperor seemed undecided. We rejoined the rest of the party and as a matter of fact my husband, instead of returning to his palace, went to his mother's house.† I admit that in spite of all the malicious gossip this caused, I congratulated myself that he had done so, so much did his presence terrify me. This was the first ostensible act that told the public of our disunion.

The children always spent the afternoon with their father. The younger one, who had not been well for several days, was not able to go out. My husband lost his temper and protested loudly that I wished to prevent his seeing the little boy and he came alone in the evening

* See Note p 280

† See Note p 281.

to convince himself that the child was really ill, and that I was not deceiving him.

When married people are unhappy together everything becomes a cause of quarrelling and discussion. The Emperor had insisted that my husband should make me a formal visit and that I should return his call. We occasionally met at the Tuileries and, as I have heard since, he said that he found me so altered in appearance that he felt sorry for me. He fell ill. I went to see him and entered without being announced, anxious to obtain news of his health. The next day when I went back he refused to receive me. I was much upset. At last in response to our repeated solicitations, the Emperor called a family council to pronounce on the question of our separation. Neither side was able to present any serious grounds and the Emperor repeated several times. They are two children. There isn't so much as a sheet of paper between them. They must make up their quarrel.

Just at this time Paris was very gay and many fêtes were given to celebrate the peace with Austria*. Everyone knew that the Emperor's divorce would shortly take place, but the Empress, faithful to her usual plan, attended all the receptions with the crown on her head although she knew that it would soon be worn by another. At this time and up to the day of the divorce, the kings of Saxony, Wurtemberg and Bavaria were in Paris. The Empress received them. My brother had gone to meet the King of Bavaria to inform him of the separation. He was very grieved, and vexed to be in Paris just at a time which made it seem as though he had come to be a witness of it. He wished that some definite situation be assured to my brother, and the Emperor, far from refusing, proposed to Eugène to form a kingdom made up of the Illyrian provinces, the Tyrol or any other region he preferred. My brother had always the same answer. I want for nothing, do not trouble about me.

The Empress, too, insisted that something must be done for her son, as his title of Prince of Venice did not satisfy him the Italian crown, which belonged by right to the second son of the Emperor. But the Victory cap'd the

clearly that he would accept neither crown nor any other advantage that might seem bought by his mother's misfortune.*

Finally, on December 15th, 1809, the day of the divorce, all the family assembled in the Emperor's principal study where he had been alone with the Empress. Each took his place in order of rank. The High Chancellor and Count Regnaud de Saint-Jean d'Angely came in, and both remained standing. The Emperor took up a paper and began to read in a clear and steady voice, but when he came to the phrase: "She has embellished my life for fifteen years," his emotion was evident.* The Empress then read her statement. Tears prevented her from completing it. She handed it to Count Regnaud who finished it although he, too, was weeping. The official report of the proceeding having been drawn up and signed by all those present the Emperor embraced the Empress, took her hand and led her to her apartment. A little later he came to fetch me and took me to her. I found her exhausted and overcome with the strain she had been under. I felt it was necessary to keep up her courage to the end. In order to do so I reminded her of the misfortunes of that other queen who had preceded her in this palace and who had left it to mount the scaffold. I spoke of the difference of her fate and of the consolations that still remained to her. I did succeed in reviving her courage. On the preceding day my brother had gone to the Senate to announce the divorce and declare that it took place with our full consent.*

The next morning early I went to see my mother. Her drawing-room was filled with ladies-in-waiting weeping over her departure. I feared the effect this emotion might produce on her although I considered that the worst was already over. To leave a Court is not the same as leaving a place where you have been happy. I led my mother to her carriage while the Emperor was at his cabinet meeting.* He had already said good-bye to her. I was not present when he did so but I can imagine how heartrending it must have been. Our drive to Malmaison was sad and silent. When my mother entered that house where she

* See Note p 281

had been so happy her heart was heavy with grief "If he is happy," she said to me, "I shall not regret what I have done." As she spoke her eyes constantly filled with tears

The day after she had left the Tuileries the Emperor came to visit her. This ceremony of going to meet him who only twenty-four hours before had been her husband, made a deep impression on everyone. He took her hand affectionately and walked with her for a long time near the château. Every day he sent her a messenger with a letter complaining of his loneliness, and said how much he missed her.* He went to the Trianon and asked us to visit him there. I accompanied my mother and this interview, too, was a touching one (Christmas Day, 1809).

The Emperor insisted that my mother must stay to dinner. As usual he sat opposite her. Nothing seemed changed. The Queen of Naples and I were the only guests. The Emperor's pages and the Prefect of the Palace were in attendance as usual. There was a deep silence. My mother could take nothing and I thought she was going to faint. The Emperor wiped his eyes several times without saying a word, and we left immediately after dinner.

My mother afterwards reminded me of the tears she had seen in the eyes of the man for whom she still cared so much, and seemed to find a moment's comfort in this sign that he shared her regrets. But time went on. Letters became more rare and she still waited for them. There was a little room from which she could get a view of the high road. Every time she heard that there would be a hunt in the forest of Saint-Germain she would stand at the window till she had seen the Emperor's carriage pass and repass. I began to fear that her sacrifice was costing dearer than I had at first thought it would. My brother and I united our efforts to find something to amuse her. She seemed to resign herself little by little to her fate, though for a long while the slightest attention on the Emperor's part was the only thing that could please her and renew her courage. Moreover, Malmaison was constantly crowded with people who, whether they were

* See Note p. 281

petty tradesmen or Cabinet ministers or Marshals of France, brought her the homage of their respectful devotion. When the weather became very cold, she expressed a wish to return to the Elysée.* The Emperor consented, and came to see her there once or twice.

I had not left my mother for a single day when I received from the Emperor the notification of my appointment as *princess patroness* of the schools for the daughters of members of the Legion of Honour. He had from the first intended the place for me and it pleased me because it placed the young daughters of our heroes under my protection and guardianship. I called one evening to express my thanks to the Emperor, who seemed vexed that I had not been to see him sooner. He thought me ill-tempered and I was only sad, a very natural feeling after that fruitless effort on my part to obtain a separation when he had let me see that he wished on the contrary to reunite me to the King.

As a matter of fact, I constantly found myself having to bear both my worries in regard to my husband and his own troubles resulting from what was taking place in Holland. Although I knew nothing about politics, I grasped the fact that the King wished to be an independent ruler, free to promote the happiness of his subjects as he thought best, and without being forced to submit to French influence. This was a very noble sentiment and one which sprang from an almost servile attachment to his duty and to the new obligations he had assumed on ascending the throne. But how could he expect to maintain his independence at a time when all the other sovereigns of Europe were forced to agree, even against their will, to the wishes of the man who had conquered them? I said one day to one of the Cabinet ministers who had come to complain about the Emperor's severity, that he must know that I never took any part in politics, but that I was convinced that my husband was ill-advised. Perhaps, had he possessed an army capable of resisting that of the Emperor, he might have separated the politics of Holland from those of France if he judged that this was advisable, but since he was not strong enough to do so he was obliged

* See Note p 281

wholeheartedly to ally himself with France And Holland, at the price of some further suffering, must in the end secure certain advantages from the continually growing influence of its powerful neighbour, whereas another course of conduct might anger the Emperor and lead him to incorporate a country whose policy thwarted his own In this way the King, though acting with the best intentions, might do the greatest harm possible to Holland by compromising her independence This was the one and only conversation regarding affairs of state that I ever had with any of the Dutch ministers I ought probably to have shown more interest in public matters which affected my family, but I thought they were no concern of mine, a convenient notion when one has a lazy mind which places its idea of happiness elsewhere than in rank and power

My mother was burning to know who was to take her place She made careful enquiries about all the eligible princesses in Europe One day, when Madame de Metternich called, she spoke to her a great deal about the Archduchess Marie-Louise, whom she seemed to consider the most worthy choice for the Emperor Madame de Metternich reported this conversation to her husband, and she received an answer which she showed me on account of the confidence she had in me ever since I had taken her part when everyone else was avoiding her According to this letter, her husband had begged his sovereign to consider the benefits that would accrue to the countries over which he ruled, and the happiness to his daughter if she were chosen by the Emperor Napoleon as his wife The Emperor of Austria seemed quite inclined to bestow the Archduchess on Napoleon if she were asked for His wife, the Empress, had made some objections, but a few moments' conversation with Monsieur de Metternich had sufficed to convince her This letter had been shown to Monsieur de Talleyrand and no doubt the Emperor was informed of it at once, for my brother told me that he had been ordered by the Emperor to go officially to the Prince of Schwarzenberg, the Austrian ambassador, to ask for the hand of the Archduchess Marie-Louise

A cabinet meeting had been called a few days earlier* to discuss whether it would be wiser to choose the Russian or the Austrian princess. The opinion of the cabinet was divided. Those who, like my brother, preferred the latter, gave as their reason the fact that there was no point of contact between Russia and France, that there was not the slightest danger of hostilities arising between these two countries and that it was far more useful to fuse into a close alliance the interests of Austria and France which had in the past provoked friction and which continued to offer constant possibilities of conflict. This last argument proved convincing, the more so as there was the question of the difference of religion, it being understood that a Russian princess would not change her faith and that it would be dangerous to allow a priest of the Greek Church to come between husband and wife. It was therefore decided that the Archduchess Marie-Louise should become Empress of France and that the Queen of Naples was to go to the Austrian frontier to meet her. The Prince de Neufchâtel was sent to convey the Emperor's proclamation to the Archduke Charles, who was to represent the Emperor of the French at the ceremonies in Vienna.*

As for the Emperor, his mind was entirely taken up by the thought of his young wife. It seemed as though he could never hear enough details about her. Whenever a page or an aide-de-camp returned after taking a letter or a present, he would be overwhelmed with questions. All agreed in saying that she had a good figure, was blonde, had a fresh complexion and a pretty foot, but no one dared claim that she was pretty. Monsieur de Talleyrand one day repeated to me a report made by a young aide-de-camp to the Emperor in his presence : " Tell me frankly," said the Emperor. " How did the Archduchess Marie-Louise impress you ? "—" Most favourably, sire."—" ' Most favourably ' does not convey any information. Come, now. How tall is she ? " " Sire, she is a good height," here he hesitated a moment and added " about as tall as the Queen of Holland."—" Ah ! that is very nice. What colour is her hair ? "—" Fair, much like that of the Queen of Holland."—" Good. And her complexion ? "

* See Note p. 281

—"Very white, with a very bright colour, like the Queen of Holland"—"Ah! then she is like the Queen of Holland?"—"No, sire, and yet I have given an absolutely truthful answer to every question you have asked" The Emperor dismissed him, shook his head and said "I cannot get a word out of them! I see that my wife is ugly, for not one of these confounded young fellows has been able to say that she is pretty Well, as long as she is kind and bears me healthy sons I will love her as though she were the most beautiful woman on earth"

The choice of a chief lady-in-waiting for the new Empress was a question that caused much talk among the courtiers She had to be a woman of absolutely irreproachable character All the old nobility of the Faubourg Saint-Germain asserted their right to this position According to them the niece of the unfortunate Marie Antoinette could only have families who had served her aunt round about her On the other hand the military and the new nobility dreaded the influence of the old Court party and the disdain with which they might be treated by the old aristocrats The Emperor's choice was the wisest possible. No one had thought of it and yet everyone approved it The Duchesse de Montebello had, since the death of her husband (Marshal Lanres) lived in retirement, her only interest being the education of her children Admired by all, still young and beautiful, her appointment proved that the Emperor did not forget those heroes who had died for their country's cause and that he did not want to place near his young wife some person who might have taught her not to like all French people equally

Never before had such luxury been seen as that which prepared the Emperor's marriage Nothing seemed good enough for the Empress, and the Emperor enquired into the smallest details of everything that concerned her as though he had nothing else to think about

The King and Queen of Westphalia, the Queen of Spain, the King and Queen of Naples, the Duchess of Tuscany, the Prince and Princess of Baden, the Princess Pauline and my husband often met of an evening at the

Tuileries. I spent my time between my mother and these gatherings, which the presence of my husband made rather embarrassing for me. At one of them the Emperor was in especially good spirits. "It is time now," he said, "for me to learn to be charming. My serious and solemn ways will not please a young wife. She will enjoy the pastimes of youth. Come, Hortense, you who are our Terpsichore, teach me how to waltz." This proposal from the Emperor seemed so extraordinary that we burst out laughing. It was not a joke. He meant it seriously and I gave him lessons for two evenings. He had little natural aptitude and laughed himself at his awkwardness. But he soon tired of the whim, saying : "We must leave to each time of life what suits it. I am too old. Moreover, it was not as a dancer that I was ever meant to shine."

My brother had gone back to Italy, whence he was to return with his wife to attend the wedding. I received a very sad letter from him telling me that General de Broc, who had served under him during the German campaign, was lying dangerously ill at Milan. I could not keep this bad news from my friend, who went immediately to nurse her husband, but at Chambéry she met my brother and my sister-in-law, who told her of his death. She was heartbroken and I shared her sorrow as though it had been my own. Never did I see deeper or more lasting grief, though neither her health nor even her beauty was impaired by it, so beneficent were the tears she was able to shed freely.

I had never met my sister-in-law before, but had been constantly hearing about her. The happiness she had brought my brother sufficed to make me fond of her. I went to meet her on the road to Fontainebleau, and found her much as she had been described, with remarkable beauty and freshness of complexion. Although very tall and slight, her figure was so well proportioned that she did not look remarkable. She was always simple in manner and most considerate to others. In every respect she made an ideal princess, as I have often heard said, even by the Emperor himself. We became as sincerely attached to one another as two people can be who have common

acutely hostile that I had reason to fear it. All his conversation was about the necessity of my returning to Holland and the right he had to make me do so.

After this I had to resist the most pressing entreaties of my husband's family. I replied to each of them that I believed him capable of doing anything to injure me, but that if he were not king of the country in which he lived I might be willing to go there in the hope of getting some sort of recognition of my rights from some all-powerful judge. But what could I expect at the hands of a man who treated me as his enemy? I wrote a despairing letter to the Emperor. He did not answer me.

In the end even my brother concerned himself with this semi-reconciliation. I told him in detail all my troubles. But how was I to make him understand? One must have lived through such miseries to believe in them. People fancy that emotion blinds the person who complains. Only reputation is thought of and it may be that life is sacrificed to it. Eugène repeated to me "Make this last effort on account of public opinion. No one knows how often you have already tried to improve this exacting temper. You are blamed because you are not better known. Show how brave you are, and if you cannot win a little domestic happiness in the long run your perseverance will at least have given you the right to live alone, in peace and respected by all." It is difficult to be sure enough of oneself to resist the advice of a dearly-loved brother, especially when you value his approval, but he deceived himself. He could not understand that after all my vain attempts, which only I knew about, I had neither health, strength, nor hope left to enable me to try again. Thus, sunk in a state of dull discouragement, haunted by the constantly recurring idea that no one cared what became of me, not even among those whom I loved best, I finally gave my consent to the departure which so many people desired, and prepared to return to the land of sorrow much as a condemned man goes forth to his doom.

My brother, whose affection for me took alarm when I ceased to make any protest, stipulated that it must be he who should lay down the conditions. It was agreed

that I was to live in the same palace as my husband, that he was not to oppose my visit to health resorts whenever necessary, that I was to be allowed to take my own chambermaids, for none of my French ladies-in-waiting could accompany me. I obtained permission to leave my younger child in Paris on account of his delicate health, and I made my preparations to set out with my elder son immediately after the wedding, taking Madame de Boubers and Monsieur de Marmol with me.

My domestic troubles interested no one except myself. The entire court was taken up with the prospect of the coming festivities and the welcome to be given to the Empress. There was much discussion between the kings and the princesses in regard to the proper ceremonial to be observed on meeting her, and nobody was satisfied.*

I often smiled to see so much eagerness over things which to me seem to be of little consequence. A heart that suffers knows the true value of all that is vanity. No decision had yet been settled when the Emperor found a short way out of all the difficulties. One morning we started out in a carriage alone with the King of Naples, and drove to meet the Empress, whom he met near Noyon. The Emperor stopped his carriage, and entering hers unannounced, embraced her tenderly. The Queen of Naples was with them. At seven o'clock in the evening we all took our places in full court dress at the foot of the grand staircase to welcome the newcomer. We kissed her but hardly had a chance of seeing her as she passed. She passed through the gallery where all the town and the Court were assembled and then disappeared and was no more seen till next morning. She received us cordially. Her manner was gentle and kindly, although rather shy. We were all pleased with her.

The court then went to Saint-Cloud,† where the civil marriage took place on April 1st. A stately procession proceeded thence to the Tuileries.† I was with the Queen of Spain and the Grand Duke of Würzburg. We preceded the Emperor's carriage. I will not describe the scene, for the contemporary newspapers must have done so.

* See Note p 281.

† See Note p 282

During the Empire public ceremonies were always imposing and beautiful. The Arc de Triomphe de l'Etoile, already begun, had provisionally been completed in wood*. It was easy to foresee the magnificent effect it would produce later*. Along the way the crowds seemed to me rather cold. The common people did not express any pleasure at seeing another Austrian woman on the throne, but Parisian society, which had mustered in full force in the gallery of the Louvre, burst forth into expressions of intense enthusiasm, some on account of old memories, others in hopes of a lasting peace, others again because they were stirred by the emotion which any spectacular and brilliant sight can arouse.

Before proceeding to the temporary chapel* the Emperor and Empress rested in their apartments. The Imperial mantles were brought from Notre-Dame, where they had been kept since the coronation. The Empress put on the one which my mother had worn and the Queen of Spain, the Queen of Westphalia, the Grand Duchess of Tuscany, Princess Pauline and I carried the train. The Queen of Naples, the wife of the Viceroy of Italy, and the Princess of Baden walked ahead carrying tapers and different insignia. In this order we passed through the gallery and arrived at the room which had been arranged as a temporary chapel. The Court and the Diplomatic Corps were in stands erected around the walls. The ceremony was rather short. The spectators frequently glanced at my brother and me, trying to guess what our impressions were. This movement of curiosity embarrassed me, although I knew that no emotion would betray itself on my features. Indeed, as I sincerely believed that my mother was happier in her quiet retreat than surrounded with all this pomp, I could not regret for her sake what I personally did not envy.

My husband left after the marriage and sent me word by Madame de Boubers that he was preceding me but that he counted on my keeping my promise. Madame de Boubers told me that, as he was going away, his sisters had tried to persuade him to take his son, who happened to be present with him, but that he had refused, saying

"The Queen has given me her promise. She will not break it." I was grateful to him for this token of confidence. While I was making my final preparation for my journey, Madame de Broc, overcoming her own grief, hurried to see me.

"What is this I hear?" she exclaimed, "that you are going back to Holland? Do you want to die? I, who so often urged you to fulfil your duties no matter how disagreeable they might be, now implore you to give up such an idea. Do not let despair lead you to sacrifice yourself to such an extent." She guessed how discouraged I was and knew that, for some time, I had not been telling her my troubles in order not to add to hers. "I have given my promise, my dear Adèle." This was all I could say and we separated overwhelmed with grief.

Monsieur de Flahaut had been ill in Vienna* after the war for a long time. He was still far from well since his return and made a great effort in order to come to see me as soon as he heard what I intended to do. His tears, his profound distress, his renewed protestations of eternal devotion, everything in his farewell showed a depth of feeling which I had always suspected, and this affection made me still cling to life in spite of myself, and regret my courage, since this seemed to be taking me from all I loved to a sure and early death.

My mother was at Navarre. I had not strength to go to bid her good-bye. I wrote to her. I cannot tell whether she saw in my letter how completely I was surrendering myself to my fate, but she was unhappy and anxious over the decision I had made.

I went to Compiègne. The Emperor was entirely taken up with his new wife.* The princes and princesses, yielding to the appeal of amusements, dances and all those tumultuous pleasures which found expression there, spent their time trying to outshine one another in popularity, magnificence and pomp. The whole court was given over to rejoicing. I alone was sad, an alien to all my surroundings. At last the time came for me to take leave of the Emperor and Empress.* I wept as I did so. The Emperor seemed touched by the sight

* See Note p 282

of my tears, "Why are you leaving so soon?" he enquired.

I did not reply and hurried to my carriage without seeing anybody.

My son and Madame de Boubers were my only companions. As we left Compiègne I breathed more freely. I had no longer to curb my emotions, and this was a relief after all the constraint that I had put upon myself of late.

When I reached Utrecht I was unexpected.* The King was at Amsterdam. Madame de Boubers went to put my child to bed. My other carriages did not arrive. For three hours I remained alone. How sad my thoughts were! The next day the King joined me. He was overjoyed to see his son again, but paid little or no attention to me. I received the principal persons of the city and my pallor was so great, the change in my appearance so extraordinary that everyone looked at me with pity and sympathy.

The Palace of Amsterdam, formerly the town-hall, was very handsome. The King had added many new decorations, but no dwelling could have been more depressing inside. My drawing-room, previously the criminal court, was decorated with a frieze of skulls in black and white marble. No one had thought of removing this ornamentation which was much admired. The galleries were gloomy, and my rooms looked out on the wall of a church, they had a horrid smell and when the windows were opened a heavy air and odour of sulphur rose from the canal. My Dutch ladies-in-waiting seemed very pleasant, but they were strangers to me, most of them had been recently appointed. I spent my morning alone, reading in my room. I hardly saw my son. Word would be sent me at dinner time that the King was waiting for me. I came, and at table not one word was said. After dinner the King let his fingers wander over the keys of the piano which stood open. He would take his son on his knees, kiss him and lead him out on the balcony which overlooked the square. The people when they saw them would give a few cheers. The King then came back into the room, sat down again at the piano, recited a few lines of French verse

* See Note p. 252.

or hummed an air. I would stay in an arm-chair without speaking, watching what went on in the room. When a few hours had passed thus, my husband, becoming conscious of the strained situation, would ring and send for the Dutch members of our household and the ladies-in-waiting. Card tables would be brought out. Sometimes I played too, and at nine o'clock I returned to my apartments after having said good-night, the only word we had spoken to one another. This is an exact picture of my everyday life at Amsterdam.

So I was less unhappy, less miserable than I had been, but my strength was worn out by sorrow and I had lost all my former energy, and this loneliness in a foreign land appalled me with terror. I had no taste for any amusement except reading novels of the most blood-curdling kind. The works of Ann Radcliffe were very useful to me. I could not have fixed my mind on anything serious and to obtain a moment's respite I was obliged to interest myself in these grisly tales and in the picture of miseries much like our own.

My brother, who was anxious about me, sent me one of his aides-de-camp. I told him to reassure my brother. I was too much touched by Eugène's kindness to increase his uneasiness by speaking of my health and low spirits.

French troops, under some pretext or other, came into Holland and the king (who to preserve the independence of his country had sacrificed considerable territory to the demands of France) was constantly at variance with the Emperor. As their correspondence was tinged by the asperity of their political differences, my husband thought that a letter from me might persuade the Emperor to remove the troops of occupation, whose presence might affect the popularity of my children. I wrote as he wished. But I received no answer.

In the meanwhile the heavy air of Amsterdam increased my weakness. I was only able to breathe by having vinegar constantly burned in the room. My husband's French physician became alarmed to see me so ill. "Madame," he declared, "your condition is serious; if I say so, people will not believe me. I beg you to call in

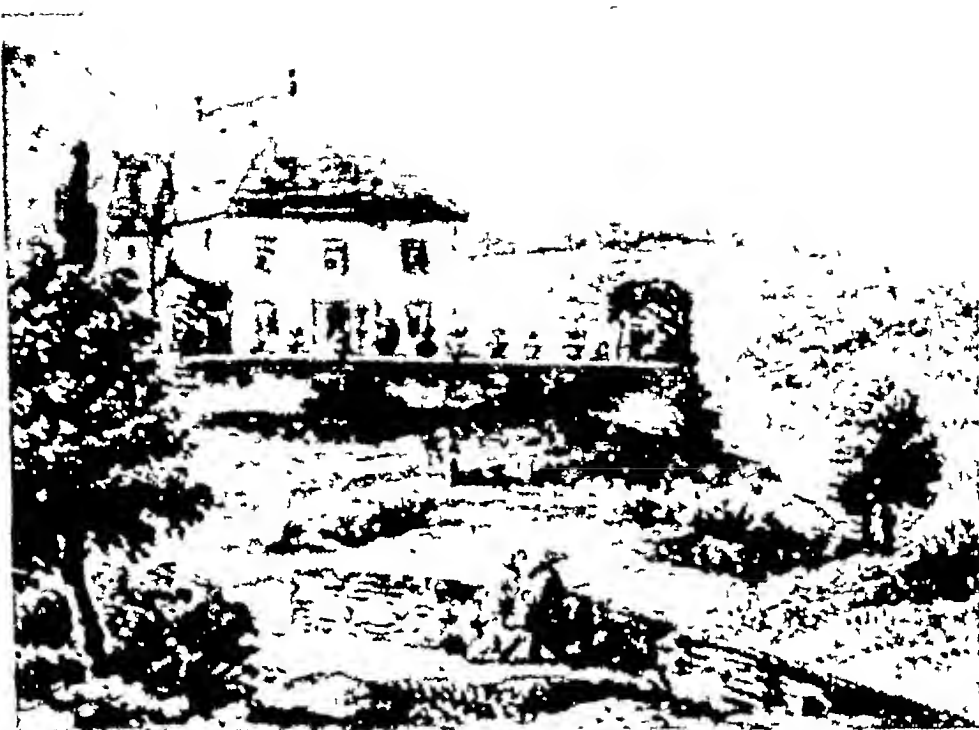
the principal Dutch doctor. It is absolutely necessary for you to have a change of air and he is the only one who can convince the King." In truth, like his French colleague, the Dutch physician found me in an alarming state of health. I do not know what he may have told the King, but I heard no more about the matter. I felt that if I stayed where I was I should die, and, as I have just said, to die there, utterly alone, with no one to care for or console me, was a terrible thought. But how was I to leave? I could not without the King's permission.

Meanwhile my health grew steadily worse. I felt that unless I had the courage to ask permission to go away I should in a short time not have the strength to leave. The terror with which my husband inspired me was still so acute that I hardly dared ask him a question. I finally ventured to do so, however. I told him that the air of Amsterdam was killing me, and reminded him of his promise to allow me to go and take the waters whenever the doctors prescribed them for me. He made many objections, but it was finally decided that I might go to the Château of Loo in Holland,* where I could breathe a purer air. I left my little son with a heavy heart, though I was easy in my mind since I left Madame de Boubers to take care of him.

Loo was the same to me as Amsterdam. My one hope of salvation was in the happy mountains which had seen my bright youth, and for whose pure air I so longed. I wrote to the King that I could no longer put off trying this cure, which had proved so beneficial in the past. He did not dare refuse me, but replied with a long letter, in which he spoke of the future of my children in Holland and of our duty to keep this country for them to reign over.* I did not at the time understand what he meant, for I was unaware that the discussions between the two brothers had reached a point at which my husband feared that Holland would lose her independence.

I left* with one of my Dutch ladies-in waiting and two of my equerries, Monsieur de Renesse and Monsieur de Marmol. As I drew nearer I ran I felt that I was being restored to life. Everything stirred my emotions. The

* See Note p. 353



*Drawing by
Queen Hortense*

*belonging to
Prince Napoleon*

HOUSE AT AIX WHERE THE QUEEN STAYED IN 1810



*Drawing by
Queen Hortense*

*belonging to
Prince Napoleon*

BEDROOM OF QUEEN HORTENSE AT PLOMBIERES,

first customs-house officials who spoke my language made my heart beat faster. The first hill I caught sight of made tears come to my eyes. Yet I feared that I should not get to the end of my journey for all my courage. I was very ill. If I had been inclined to delude myself the consternation of those about me, the words that escaped from the people who came to look at me while our horses were being changed, would have made me realize what a condition I was in. "Ah, how ill she looks! She must be dying!"—"If only I can reach Plombières," I said to myself, "I shall be saved." In the end I arrived, but only to see my illness increased by an inflammation of the lungs and expectoration of blood. My own doctor and Mademoiselle Cochelet came from Paris. Careful nursing, my youth, a greater peace of mind were what restored me to life. Madame de Broc hastened to me, but she was still so inconsolable for the loss of her husband that her grief, which I so intimately shared, increased my fever, and my doctor insisted on her return to Paris in order not to retard my convalescence.

Rest was absolutely necessary to me. Yet constantly something unforeseen disturbed my peace. From Paris I received letters giving all the details of the dreadful fire that had broken out at the Princess Schwarzenberg's during a reception given for the Empress Marie-Louise.* My family, my friends had been in great danger, and the account of this terrible accident became a real danger for me, so sharp was the emotion it caused in my enfeebled condition.

Soon afterwards a messenger brought me news of the abdication of the King of Holland, and my nomination as Regent in accordance with the Constitution. Anxiety for the King was my first feeling.⁺ No one knew where he had taken refuge. I imagined that he had left for America, alone, with no one to help him, no one to console him. His fate revived all my interest. I could almost believe that he was dear to me now that he was unfortunate.

I wrote to the Emperor to calm his resentment and claim his support for the brother* with whom I supposed him offended. I received several communications in which he

* See Note p. 282

announced his intention of annexing Holland, and told me what reply I should give to the various legislative bodies, whose delegate, the Baron de Spaen, came to inform me of my nomination as Regent.

The Emperor's letters contained severe strictures on my husband's conduct. Often a violent expression was used to define a very simple fact, and his displeasure could be weighed by the force of his language. For instance, he said to me "The King has gone, leaving his son utterly destitute." I ought to have understood that he was carried away by his anger, but he had struck my heart at its tenderest point, and the tense state of my nerves and the agitation in which the constant arrival of these mails kept me, disposed me to the most gloomy imaginings. I could see nothing with my mind's eye except my little son bereft of all support. I forgot the throne which he still occupied and pictured him utterly deserted while I was powerless to rescue him.* Directly this alarming account reached me I sent Monsieur de Marmol to bring the child to me. But the Emperor had forestalled me and one of his aides-de-camp, Monsieur de Lauriston, took the boy to Saint-Cloud after he had reigned for a week, for he had already received the oaths of allegiance from the various branches of the government before the union of Holland and France was announced.

I heard that my husband had left the Palace of Haarlem with the utmost secrecy,* accompanied by the General commanding the royal guard. This General was a Frenchman, formerly an officer in my husband's old regiment of dragoons. He owed his promotion to my husband and sacrificed his prospects to his duty cheerfully. The king had found out that it was the Emperor's firm intention to annex Holland. French troops occupied the country and it was impossible to oppose them. So he had made up his mind to withdraw. I am far from blaming his decision. On the contrary it is always noble to give up a throne on conscientious grounds. Only I found it hard to forgive him for having made me go back to Holland to further his policy when I had always kept aloof from public affairs.*

I soon heard of his arrival at the springs of Teeples

* See Note p. 283.

The certainty of my utter inability to help him and the fear that my presence would disturb his peace by reminding him of a past he had made so unhappy alone prevented me from yielding to my first impulse, which urged me to go to join him. Had I thought that it was in my power to console him I should not have hesitated. I should even have relegated the sacred interests of my children to the second place, but, convinced as I was that I could do nothing, I should only have assumed in the eyes of the world an appearance of generosity without being able to soothe the existence of him for whom I should have made so great a sacrifice.

APPENDIX

UNPUBLISHED LETTERS WRITTEN BY NAPOLEON I TO QUEEN
HORTENSE FROM JUNE 10TH, 1796 TO JUNE 10TH, 1815

The originals of all the following letters, with one exception, are part of the archives of Prince Napoleon. Preserved by Queen Hortense, they passed from her hands into those of her son Napoleon III, then to the Empress Eugénie and on the latter's death in 1920 became the property of the Prince Napoleon.

Of the forty-eight letters, some have already been published either by the Queen herself, or in the Correspondance de Napoléon I and some in other volumes. In order to present the whole of the Emperor's letters to his stepdaughter, we have included those already known.

DURING THE CAMPAIGN OF ITALY

The first letter of the collection is dated Milan, 22 Prairial, year IV (June 10th, 1796).

The Memoirs of the Queen contain an account of the circumstances in which it was written. General Bonaparte, who had married Joséphine on March 9th, 1796, had left Paris, March 11, in the evening. His wife was to follow him, but not until June 26th.

At that time, Hortense, who was not yet thirteen years old, was at the boarding school kept by Madame Campan in Saint-Germain. She and her brother had both grieved at their mother's remarriage. Hortense sulked and did not wish to write to the General. Madame Campan, however, believed

on her doing so. *Hortense was obliged to obey, but did so with a bad grace. She says "My letter centred around one idea and might be summed up as follows: I have been told of your marriage with my mother. What surprises me is that you, whom I have so often heard speak badly of women, should have made up your mind to marry one."* The General's reply "was very long and written in an extremely difficult hand, practically undecipherable," so much so in fact, that it was not till years later that, thanks to the Consul's secretary, Bourrienne, Hortense finally learned "all the kind phrases it contained."

Here is the letter. In it Bonaparte shows himself to us in a new light: the great leader has become a tender and affectionate papa.

The original is entirely in the General's handwriting. On the document itself the words in italics are in printed character.

At Headquarters, Milan, 22 Prairial, IVth year of the Republic one and indivisible. Bonaparte, Commander-in-chief of the Army in Italy

TO MADEMOISELLE HORTENSE,

I have received your charming letter. In the midst of the horrors of war, there is nothing more delightful than to be reminded of those dear children whom I love for their own sake and also because they belong to the person for whom I care more than anyone else in the world.

You are a naughty, a very naughty girl. You wish to make me contradict myself. You should know, charming Hortense, that when we speak ill of men, we make an exception in our own favour, when we speak ill of women, we except the one whose charm and gentle ways have captured our heart and engrossed all our attention. . . And then, as you know very well, your mother is not to be compared with anyone else on earth. No one can unite her never varying gentleness with that indescribable something that breathes into everything that comes near her. If anything could add to the joy I feel in belonging to her, it is the welcome responsibilities it involves towards you. I shall have a father's feeling for you, and you will love in me your best friend. But I am cross with you and cross with

¹ Hortense must have sent this letter towards the end of Germinal of the year IV (1796), for on Floreal 5 (April 24) Bonaparte wrote to Joséphine, "I have received a letter from Hortense. It is quite charming. I will write to her. I am very fond of her and I will send her soon the perfumes she would like to have." (Letter published by Frédéric Masson, *Madame Bonaparte*, page 26.)

your dear mamma. She promised to come and see me and she has not come. Time goes slowly when we are far from those we love. Think of how glad I shall be to see you in Paris (?) to argue with you and tell you terrible tales. Keep me a little place in your memory. A kiss to Eugène to whom I ought to write. Believe me while life lasts

Yours,

BONAPARTE.

P S—You should have received the little box of perfume. I will bring you a hundred pretty things

DURING THE EXCURSION TO NORMANDY

On January 4th, 1802, Hortense married Louis Bonaparte. The ties which united her to her stepfather were strengthened by this marriage. As in the first letter, one notes an affectionately teasing tone in the following, written while the First Consul was on a tour to Rouen, Havre and Dieppe. He did not date it but the allusion to his return makes it plain that it was written Brumaire 22, Year XI (November 13th, 1802).¹

MADAME HORTENSE LOUIS—Your mamma is well. She will be at St. Cloud to-morrow at midnight. The big booby (gr^{and} benêt)² is dashing about and looks after all the pretty women he meets and dances every night. We are well and love you as much as you deserve. As you probably have a pretty good opinion of your deserts this is saying much. Give a kiss and a good box on the ear from me to your big Louis.

Always yours

B

BIRTHDAY GREETING

Years went by. Madame Louis Bonaparte had become Princess Louis, wife of the Constable of the Empire. Since her first letter in 1796, she had never written to her stepfather.

¹ The original is in Napoleon's hand and signed. On a very rare document of the lifetime of Hortense the latter has written: "After this letter from Paris to Rouen in 1802."

² Eugène who since October 13th, 1802 had been Colonel of the 1st regiment of the Garde des consuls.

But, in 1804, as his feast-day, August 15th, drew near, her new position made it obligatory for her to present her best wishes on that occasion. She writes: "During one of the Emperor's journeys to Boulogne, Caroline came to see me about sending him good wishes for his birthday. . . . Together we composed two letters which were practically identical. The answer to Caroline, dictated to a secretary, was merely signed by the Emperor. The answer to me was charming and entirely in the Emperor's own handwriting."

Here is the letter dated August 15th, 1804. Hortense was then expecting her second son, Prince Napoléon-Louis, who was born on October 11, 1804.

MY DEAR DAUGHTER,

I was just going to write to you to beg you to give me your news for I had heard nothing of you for a month, and meanwhile I am anxious about your health, which must be unsettled by your pregnancy¹ And here is Eugène with your letter.

I know how to value your feeling for me, and you can rest assured that nothing can change the fatherly affection I have given you from your earliest childhood. Your peace of mind, your health, your happiness, like those of your brother, are among the things which concern me most deeply.

Write to me from time to time. Tell me what is happening to *Monsieur le Connétable*,² whom I never hear mentioned, and do not forget to give two kisses from me to Monsieur Napoléon³

Trusting the Almighty may watch over you, my dear daughter, and have you in His holy keeping.

NAPOLEON.

Pont-de-Briques, 27 Th.

MATCH-MAKING

Hortense had a passion for match-making. Her good offices were especially active in the cases of the girls who had been her fellow pupils at Saint-Germain. Thanks to her, Madame Campan's school might be compared to a florist's nursery from

¹ The day before, April 14th, 1804, Napoleon writing to Joséphine said "I do not hear from Hortense any more than if she were in the Congo. I am writing to scold her" (*Lettres de Napoléon à Joséphine*, page 46)

² Louis Bonaparte

³ Hortense's eldest son Prince Napoléon-Charles

which emerged a number of the wives of the Imperial nobility. Napoleon knew his stepdaughter's hobby. Three days after having sent her the foregoing letter, he wrote her the following one, August 18th, 1804, written and signed by his own hand.

MY DEAR DAUGHTER,

I send you an offer of marriage for one of Madame Campan's pupils. See what you can do to arrange matters. The officer who makes the demand is a man of merit.

Two kisses to Monsieur Napoléon. A thousand pleasant things to you and reproaches to Louis who doesn't let me know where he is nor what he is doing.

NAPOLEON

Pont-de-Briques 30 Th.

AT THE CAMP AT BOULOGNE

August 15th, 1805, is drawing near. Hortense sends birthday greetings to the Emperor, who since August 2nd has been at Boulogne. As for her, she has accompanied her husband who, after being appointed commander of the reserve troops of the Army designated for the invasion of England, prefers to drink the waters at the little village of Saint-Amand rather than remain at his headquarters at Lille.

A messenger brought to the Petit Chateau de la Cruette, Saint-Amand, the following letter written and signed by the Emperor. It should bear the date of August 12th, 1805 (24 Thermidor, Year XIII).

I received with much pleasure my dear little daughter's letter which was as charming as everything that comes from you. You have made me think that I am becoming quite an old grandfather but what you tell me of Napoleon's election makes me see a third generation for I knew your husband when he was such a little thing that I could consider him as the son of my son.

I have been several days in Boulogne and shall be there some time to come. I should be glad if you would write to me and you would be more than kind if you would bring my love and come and spend five or six days here. Arrange it with Louis. It will make your stay at the waters a little gay. Tell me that Saint-Amand is dull.

Good-bye, my dear little girl. A thousand loving kisses. Napoleon junior, whom I left at Saint-Cloud, is very well.¹ As for me I should be very glad to see you. You will never know how fond of you I am and how much I care for you. I wrote yesterday and sent the letter by messenger to little Mother.

NAPOLÉON.

From my Imperial Camp at Boulogne, Monday 24th.

AN INFORMAL LETTER

A month later, Napoleon writes from Saint-Cloud where he is getting ready to start on the wonderful campaign which culminated in Waterloo. On 19 Fructidor, Year XII (September 6th, 1805), he sent Princess Louis, who was still at Saint-Amand, the following letter. It is in his own hand.

MY DEAR LITTLE GIRL,

I was glad to get your letter. You know how fond I am of you, how much I have always esteemed you and how constantly anxious I am to know that you are enjoying yourself and surrounded by the pleasures and pastimes suitable to your age. Give Napoleon a big kiss from me. Try and keep Louis good-natured and less solemn. He has the qualities of a man of fifty. He should try and have the high spirits and good humour of a man of twenty-five.

Good-bye, I have such a lot to do. I hope you will be here before I leave.

NAPOLÉON.

19 Fruct

THE FUTURE OF PRINCE NAPOLÉON-CHARLES

The Queen tells (page 135) how, during this same campaign, the Emperor wrote to her from Vienna that "he hoped her son would prove worthy of his future position." The original of this letter is missing in the collection preserved by Prince Napoleon. But a copy made during the Queen's lifetime gives us the text. The note is dated December 13th, 1805 (22 Frimaire, Year XIV).

¹ The Queen had only taken her elder son to Saint-Amand with her and left the younger one, Napoleon-Louis, at Saint-Cloud.

I have received my dear little Hortense, the letter from Napoléon, in which I recognize all his mother's tenderness and affection. With all my heart I hope that as he grows up he may learn all that he must know in order to be worthy of his future destiny. Good bye my little girl. You know that I shall always love you as I have done since your childhood.

NAPOLEON

Vienna 22 Frimaire.

THE MARRIAGE OF EUGÈNE

Hortense was bitterly disappointed when her husband refused to allow her to go to Munich to attend the marriage of her dearly-loved brother Eugène with Princess Augusta of Bavaria (January 14th, 1806). Napoleon was not able to protest in time to have Louis's refusal rescinded. The following letter is included in the "*Lettres de Napoléon à Joséphine*," Garnier's edition, page 237. The signature alone is in the Emperor's handwriting.

MY DAUGHTER

Eugène arrives to-morrow and his wedding takes place four days from now. I should have been very pleased if you had attended this wedding. It is too late now. Princess Augusta is tall, handsome and full of good qualities. In every respect she will prove a sister worthy of you.

A thousand kisses to Monsieur Napoléon

NAPOLEON

At Munich, January 9 1806.

THE QUEEN OF HOLLAND

On June 5th, 1806, Princess Louis became Queen of Holland. On the 15th she and her husband left for their new kingdom. She wrote from Laeken to her mother and then to the Emperor, who replied by the following note of which only the signature is in his hand¹.

¹ Letter published by Monsieur de Brotonne in his volume *Précis des Lettres inédites de Napoléon*. Paris. Champion, 1903. 2 Vol. in octavo. Vol I page 206.

MY DAUGHTER,

I have received your letter I had news of you from Laeken. I was glad to hear you have been in good health. I long to have a letter from you from the Hague, where I know your arrival is impatiently awaited.

NAPOLEON.

Saint-Cloud, June 24, 1806.

On arriving in her new dominions, the Queen implored the Emperor's mercy "on behalf of a man condemned to death." Napoleon's answer was printed in his Correspondance, Volume XII, page 616. The original is merely signed.

MY DAUGHTER,

I received your letter written Thursday. I am glad to see that you like the Dutch. You should have sent me the petition of the postmaster of Antwerp. As soon as you send it to me. I will have the matter looked into and try, out of love for you, to have his brother's sentence commuted.

Your affectionate father;

NAPOLEON.

Saint-Cloud, Sunday, June 29th, 1806.

Hardly had they settled in Holland when the King and Queen left for Mayence, June 20th. In the midst of all this, Hortense received from her stepfather the following letter, which like the foregoing one was not written in his hand but only signed. It is a reply to her letter of thanks for having granted her request and her note contained the phrase, "Napoléon is continuing to learn fables which he intends to recite to you. May he have the opportunity of doing so soon."

MY DAUGHTER,

I have received your letter, and am glad to hear that Napoleon is well I hope he will go on learning fables and exercising his memory. The waters will do you good, and the Autumn, when it brings the fêtes, will give me the pleasure of seeing you. Do not doubt the value that that has for,

Your affectionate father,

NAPOLEON.

Saint-Cloud, August 5th, 1806.

Except for a few days spent in Holland, Hortense remained at Aix-la-Chapelle and at Mayence till the end of January 1807. During this time she again had occasion to ask the Emperor to remit a prisoner's sentence, as is shown by the following letter, which was very inaccurately reproduced in the Correspondance, Volume XIII, page 374. Only the signature is in the Emperor's handwriting

MY DAUGHTER,

I have received your letter of September 24th, from Aix la Chapelle. I sent the *Grand Juge* the petition of the person in whom you are interested in order that he may be pardoned. I am always glad to hear from you.

I trust that you are well and that you never doubt the great affection that I have for you.

Your affectionate father,

NAPOLEON

Wurtzbourg, October 5th, 1806.

From Wittenberg on October 23rd, 1806, the very day he gave Davoust the order to enter Berlin, the Emperor with his own hand wrote and signed the following note

MY DAUGHTER,

I have received your letter. I am glad to know you are at Mayence. Be happy and cheerful. My affairs are going very well. I hope that I shall find Monsieur Napoléon a foot taller and a great scholar. A thousand kisses to both of you.

Your affectionate father

NAPOLEON

Wittenberg October 23rd.

Then, a few days later, this time from Berlin, another letter, but in this case, only the signature is in the Emperor's handwriting

MY DAUGHTER,

I have received your letter of the 23rd. I am glad to see that your little children grow and that you are happy at Mayence. You don't doubt my affection for you nor the pleasure it will give me to see you again.

Your affectionate father

NAPOLEON

Berlin, October 30th, 1806.

Hortense made her eldest son, Napoléon-Charles, then a boy of four, write to the Emperor, but the receiver of the letter was not deceived as to its real authorship. Monsieur de Brotonne gives the reply in his Lettres inédites de Napoléon I, page 60 ; the original was signed by the Emperor, but written by a secretary.

MY DAUGHTER,

I have received your letter and read Napoléon's. I imagine that you guided his hand. He is not clever enough to turn such pretty phrases

Your affectionate father,
NAPOLEON.

Berlin, November 8th, 1806.

Hortense had hoped that she would be able to accompany her mother to Berlin where, it was said, peace was to be signed. The following letter, signed, but not written, by the Emperor, was a disappointment to her. She had sent the Emperor an ode written by Monsieur Desprez, who, besides being her secretary, invoked the Muse.

MY DAUGHTER,

I have received your letter of the 21st. You may be sure I should have been glad to see you but the Empress is not leaving just yet, on account of my journey to Poland, where I shall be busy for several days.

I have just received your letter of the 22nd with an ode by Monsieur Desprez, which I thought good, on the battle of Iéna.

Your affectionate father,
NAPOLEON.

Posen, November 29th, 1806.

New Year's day is drawing near and Napoléon-Charles, who is only four years and three months old, again lapses into writing, and his compliments of the season are, once more, turned with a grace that arouses the Emperor's suspicions, as is shown in the following letter, entirely in his own hand, and dated January 3rd, 1807.

MY DAUGHTER,

I received your letter and that of Monsieur Napoléon, which I presume is yours too. Consequently I thank both of you.

them I wish you a happy, a very happy New Year Give a kiss and a present from me to Napoleon and to his brother and never doubt of my fatherly affection.

NAPOLEON

January 3rd.

Another letter from the little Prince, perhaps expressing his thanks for the present received, and another answer from the Emperor, the original is merely signed

MY DAUGHTER,

I have just received your letter and that of Monsieur Napoleon. I still doubt whether he knows exactly what he is writing about and fancy that the hand that guides him is that of his little mamma. In any case give him a kiss from me. I should have been very glad to see him but that pleasure must be postponed till my return, which I trust will not be long delayed.

Your very affectionate father,

NAPOLEON.

Warsaw, January 6th, 1807

The following letter, written and signed by the Emperor, is dated simply 22 without any further indication, but its text allows us to assign it to January, 1807 A week later, Hortense arrived at the Hague

MY DAUGHTER,

I have just received your letter I am sorry to hear that you are leaving the Empress. I should have been very glad to see you but your subjects in Holland will be pleased to see you. Never doubt my affection. It is boundless. A thousand kisses to your two little ones.

Your affectionate father,

NAPOLEON

22.

Hortense interferred on behalf of Rosalie-Marie-Thérèse de Rarther, widow of the Marquis de Madaillac, who in 1798 had married Jean-François de Pérusse, Comte des Cars After having been imprisoned on the island of Sainte Marguerite, during the early part of 1806, she had later been banished to Nice The original of this letter is simply signed

MY DAUGHTER,

I have just received your letter of the twentieth. I cannot do anything for Madame des Cars. She is a scheming, evil woman. As soon as I return to Paris, I will write to Louis to have you join me there. You cannot imagine how pleased I shall be to see you and how tenderly attached I am to you.

Your affectionate father,

NAPOLEON.

At Warsaw, January 29th, 1807.

HORTENSE'S CONJUGAL TROUBLES

Meanwhile the conjugal disputes of the King and Queen of Holland were an open secret. The Emperor heard of them, and in a letter dated Finkenstein, April 4th, 1807, severely rebuked his brother. These reproaches touched Louis to the quick, and Hortense in her memoirs tells us (page 155) how the King begged her to deny the acts of which he was accused. She adds: "I did as he wished, and in my letter to the Emperor I had the courage to say that I was happy." We do not possess the Queen's letter to her imperial brother-in-law; but the following, hitherto unpublished, letter is undoubtedly a reply to it. The original is not in the Emperor's hand, but is signed by him.

MY DAUGHTER,

I have received your letter. I was glad to hear that your children are well. You know even better than I do that your first duty is to please your husband. I know that he did wrong to let you see those accesses of jealousy, but after all, they show his love for you. You must devote yourself to staying constantly with him and to pleasing him in every way.

Louis is a righteous man, although he may at times have peculiar ideas. You will be entirely happy when you sacrifice everything, even what may seem to be your rights, to please him. As for me, I shall learn with the greatest pleasure that the coldness which has so often existed between you exists no more, and that you are with Louis all that a person so kind as you are should be.

Your very affectionate father,

NAPOLEON.

At Finkenstein, May 2nd, 1807.

THE DEATH OF THE PRINCE ROYAL

At the very time that the Emperor was writing this letter whose exhortations were so fruitless, a terrible calamity had befallen Hortense. Her elder son, Prince Napoléon-Charles, then four and a half years old, had fallen ill with a disease which the doctors first thought was measles, but which turned out to be diphtheria. The little boy died in the night of the 4th-5th May, 1807, fourteen years, day for day, before the end of the tragedy of Saint Helena.

On May 12th, Napoleon had not yet heard of the event. On that date, having received news of a slight improvement, he wrote to Joséphine "I hear that Napoléon is cured. I can imagine how anxious his mother must have been, but measles is an illness to which everybody is liable."¹ Two days later Napoleon heard the truth and at the same time that he wrote to Joséphine "I can divine how you grieve over the death of poor Napoléon and you can understand the sorrow that it is to me."² He wrote Hortense the following note merely signed by his hand

MY DAUGHTER,

On learning the loss that we have just suffered I thought how grief-stricken you must be. You must be brave. I am glad to know that you are going to Paris. Take care of your health in order not to increase the sorrow I already feel.

Your very affectionate father

NAPOLÉON

At Finkenstein, May 14th, 1807

The blow was a terrible one to Hortense. She fell into a sort of stupor which made her unconscious of what was going on about her. She was taken to Laeken where Joséphine and Caroline Murat joined her at once and made vain efforts to console her. A few days later, Hortense with a few attendants left for the Pyrenees.

The violence of the Queen's grief and the form it assumed displeased the Emperor. He recalled her to reality, affect-

¹ Correspondance Volume XI page 271

² Correspondance Volume XV page 274

tionately but firmly, and the following letters show us his state of mind.

MY DAUGHTER,

Everything I hear from the Hague makes it clear that you are not being sensible. No matter how justified your sorrow, it should have some limit. Do not let it affect your health. Try the effects of change, and realize that life has so many dangers and can be the source of so many ills that death is not the greatest of them.

Your affectionate father,

NAPOLEON.¹

At Finkenstein, May 20th, 1807.

MY DAUGHTER,

You have not written me a word. In your great and natural sorrow you have forgotten everything as though you had nothing more to lose. I am told that you care for nothing, that you are indifferent to everything, and I see that this is so by your silence. This is not right, Hortense! It is not what you promised us you would do. Your son was everything to you. And your mother and I, are we nothing? If I had been at Malmaison, I should have shared your grief but I should have wished you to see your closest friends. Good-bye, my daughter, be cheerful. One must be resigned. Keep well in order to fulfil all your duties. My wife is much distressed about your state. Do not add to her sorrow.

Your affectionate father,

NAPOLEON.²

June 2nd.

However, while passing through Orléans on her way South, Hortense plucked up courage to write to her stepfather. The latter replied with the following letter in his own handwriting.

¹ This letter was first published by Bégin in his *Histoire de Napoléon*, Volume IV, page 319, then in the *Correspondance*, Volume XV, page 310, and finally by Blanchard Jerrold "The Life of Napoleon III," Volume I, page 432.

² This letter, published by Hortense in *Lettres de Napoléon à Joséphine*, issued by Garnier, page 121, was reproduced in *Correspondance*, Volume XV, page 380. The original, which is in the archives of Prince Napoleon, is in the Emperor's hand. It contains no indication as to where it was written but was sent from Dantzic. In the text published by the Queen—*Lettres de Napoléon à Joséphine*—an error of punctuation changes the sense of the first two sentences which we have re-established from the original text which Blanchard reproduces in facsimile (Vol. I, page 433) and from a copy made for the Queen.

MY DAUGHTER,

I have received your letter dated from Orléans. Your sorrow moves me but I could wish you had more courage. Life means suffering and a reasonable man always strives to preserve his self-control. I do not like to see you so unjust to little Napoléon-Louis¹ and to all your friends. Your mother and I hoped that we filled a larger place in your heart than we do. I won a great victory on the 14th of June.² I am well and love you dearly. Good bye my child. I embrace you with all my heart.

NAPOLEON³

Friedland June 16th, 1807

To a letter from Hortense dated June 18th, the day on which she arrived at Caunteress, the Emperor made this answer, signed in his hand

MY DAUGHTER,

I have just received your letter of June 18th. I am pleased to hear that your health is beginning to improve. I hope that after having taken the waters you will come to Paris where I expect to be. I should be very pleased to be able to tell you there once again what are the feelings that you know I have for you.

Your very affectionate father

NAPOLEON

At Tilsit, July 5th, 1807

On August 27th, 1807, Hortense and Louis, who had recently effected a reconciliation, arrived at Saint-Cloud. The Queen in her Memoirs speaks of the cold reception she had from the Emperor

THE BIRTH OF CHARLES-LOUIS-NAPOLÉON

On April 20th, 1808, in her palace in the rue Gerani,

¹ The Queen's second son, born October 11th, 1804, died at Forlì, Italy in 1831.

² Friedland, where Napoleon defeated the Russian forces commanded by Bennigsen, a victory which led to the peace of Tilsit.

³ Published by the Queen in *Lettres de Napoléon à Joséphine*, edited by Garnier, page 123 and reproduced in *Correspondance* Volume XV page 417.

Queen Hortense gave birth to a son who eventually became Napoléon III.

Monsieur de Villeneuve was dispatched to take the news to the Emperor, who was then at Bayonne. The Emperor congratulated his stepdaughter thus :

MY DAUGHTER,

I hear that you have been happily delivered of a boy. This news gives me great happiness. The only thing that I now need to know to set my mind quite at ease is that you are well. I am surprised that a letter of the twentieth, from Arch-Chancellor, tells me nothing about it.

Your affectionate father,

NAPOLEON.¹

At Bayonne, April 23rd, 1808.

A few days later he writes again :

MY DAUGHTER,

I have received your letter. I am glad to hear that every day you are getting stronger and that your son is well. I wish him to be called Charles-Napoléon.

Your affectionate father,

NAPOLEON.²

Bayonne, May 7th, 1808.

THE KING AND QUEEN

After the birth of the little prince, Hortense remained in Paris with her children in spite of the remonstrances of Louis, who wished to have Prince Napoléon-Louis with him. A sort of intimacy revived between her and Caroline Murat, and we have read in the Memoirs the strange confidences that resulted from it. The Emperor, who at first had taken his brother's part, consented later not to oppose the wishes of his stepdaughter. That this change of front was partly due to the influence of Caroline is shown by the following letter :

¹ Correspondance, Volume XVII, page 38. Original is merely signed.

² Original merely signed.

MY DAUGHTER

Princess Caroline has told me how unhappy you are. It is a mother's duty to look after her children and bring them up till they reach the age of seven. Therefore you must keep Prince Napoléon with you. Moreover the climate of Holland would be fatal to him. His health is extremely important to me and I should be very sorry if he went there. As for you, you ought to write strongly and frankly to the King inform him how much you have suffered in the past and tell him plainly how he must treat you in future. Your maids your servants, your stable and your entire household should be separate. You are entitled to this and it is but just.

The King at heart loves you and perhaps a frank and firm explanation will make him come round again. At all events you have a right to be happy and the King is too reasonable not to realize that there is an age and a rank where everyone can claim his due. If all the details that Princess Caroline has given me are accurate the whole thing springs from the lack of a clear understanding between you.

Your affectionate father,

NAPOLEON¹

Bayonne, July 17th 1808

The Emperor left on October 29th, 1808, for the Spanish front. The Empress Joséphine was living at the Palace of the Elysée. Before leaving, Napoleon had decided that Frenchmen seated on foreign thrones should no longer receive a stipend from France. Reduced to a bare living by Louis, Hortense was short of funds, dismissed her servants and went to live with her mother.

The Emperor hearing of this impulsive conduct showed his annoyance.

MY DAUGHTER

I have just received your letter. You were wrong to dismiss your servants. That can't be done. You should first have asked my advice. Living where you do all these things are important. I think that during the Carnival you ought to entertain and do the honours in Paris. If the King does not give you what is necessary to keep up your household I will see to it.

Your affectionate father,

NAPOLEON²

At Valladolid January 8th 1809.

¹ Original written and signed by the Emperor

² Original signed by the Emperor

And indeed, Napoleon after this gave the Queen an allowance, and for her charities he had a special fund set aside.

MY DAUGHTER,

Having set aside this year a fund of 60,000 frs. on behalf of the poor widows and children of my soldiers, and the other poor of my Empire, I have given orders to my Comptroller of the Household to place at your disposal a credit of 5,000 frs. a month. These 5,000 frs are to be distributed by your order to such persons as you may designate.

Your affectionate father,

NAPOLEON.¹

From my imperial camp at Valladolid, January 13th, 1809.

A JOURNEY ABROAD

On April 13th, 1809, the Emperor left for the army, taking Joséphine with him as far as Strasbourg. Hortense also left Paris on April 27th to join her mother. The climate of Alsace did not agree with her and as she wished to try the waters of Baden, she went there with her two sons. To do so was to disobey the orders of the Emperor, who did not allow the young princes to leave France without his permission. When he learned what had occurred, he wrote the Queen an angry letter which was forwarded to her by Joséphine.

MY DAUGHTER,

I am very much displeased that you should have left France without my permission, and especially that you should have taken my nephews with you. As you are at the springs of Baden, stay there, but an hour after having received this letter, send back my two nephews to the Empress at Strasbourg. They should never go out of France. This is the first time I have ever had occasion to be displeased with you, but you ought not to make arrangements for my nephews without my permission, you must be aware of the bad effect it produces. As the waters at Baden do you good, you may stay there a few days, but I repeat, do not lose a moment in sending my nephews back to

¹ Original signed. In her Memoirs "the sum for her c" was 6,000 francs a month.

Strasbourg If the Empress goes to take the waters at Plombières they will accompany her but they must never go beyond the bridge of Strasbourg

Your affectionate father

NAPOLEON¹

At Elbersdorf, May 28th, 1809.

Hortense gave way From the beginning of June, 1809, she was at Plombières with her children and remained there four months The Emperor appreciated her prompt obedience

MY DAUGHTER,

I have received your letter Plombières will complete what Baden began I am glad to hear that the Grand Duke of Berg² and the little boy are well Try and recover your health entirely and never doubt my affection.

Your affectionate father,

June 19th (1809)

NAPOLEON³

THE RETURN TO HOLLAND

After the marriage of Napoleon and Marie-Louise, Hortense and her husband effected a compromise The Queen agreed to go back to Holland She said good-bye to the Emperor at Compiègne on April 11th, 1810, arrived at Utrecht on the 14th, and at Amsterdam on the 24th of the same month

MY DAUGHTER,

I have received your letter I am very pleased that you have arrived with your children in good health I am leaving tomorrow for Antwerp where I shall be on May 21st. I shall have news of you there. I am told that you are pleased with the King and with Holland, and I am delighted to hear this.

Your affectionate father

NAPOLEON⁴

At Compiègne April 26th, 1810.

¹ Published by the Queen in the *Lettres de Napoléon à Joséphine* by 2^e édition Diddot, Volume II page 292 Not included in *Correspondance*. Original signed

² Prince Napoleon-Louis had received this title March 3rd, 1809.

³ Original written and signed by the Emperor

⁴ Included in the *Correspondance* Volume XX, page 369. Original signed

The reunion of the King and the Queen was short-lived. On May 21st, 1810, Hortense left Amsterdam for the Loo. She remained only a few days on this royal estate and on June 1st set out for Plombières where she arrived a few days later. There she received the following affectionate letter :

MY DAUGHTER,

I was glad to hear of your arrival at Plombières. I hope the waters there will do you good. Try to enjoy yourself. Take care of your health and do not grieve over things that need not trouble you any longer. You must never doubt my affection nor my regard.

Your very affectionate father,

At Saint-Cloud, June 12th, 1810.

NAPOLEON.¹

THE ABDICATION OF LOUIS

On July 1st, 1810, King Louis abdicated the throne of Holland in favour of his son under the Regency of the Queen. Napoleon wrote Hortense, who was still at Plombières, the following letter :

MY DAUGHTER,

You will have received a mail from Holland which will have told you of the King's latest act of madness. I suppose you have imparted everything to me and that you have made no reply up to this time. I will write to you as soon as you have let me know what was written to you. My wish is to unite Holland to France. I will send you a copy of the letter I wish you to write to the council of the Regency if you have not yet answered them. I consider it would be correct for you to send one of your officers to fetch the Crown Prince. You may let him join you at Plombières if you intend to remain there some time. If not, you could go to Laeken to meet him and thence take him back to Paris.²

Freed by the act of the King you can live undisturbed in Paris. It only remains for me to know that your health is quite re-established and that you have no further cause for worry.

Your affectionate father,

At Rambouillet, July 8th, 1810.

NAPOLEON.³

¹ Original signed

² Here follow two lines which on the original have been carefully made illegible, probably by the Queen herself

³ Original signed.

At the moment that she received this despatch, Hortense was made acquainted with the King's doings by a letter from Madame de Boubers, who had remained in Holland, in charge of Prince Napoléon-Louis. She replied to the Emperor

SIRE,

I have received no mail from Holland except a letter from Madame de Boubers who tells me of the King's departure. I enclose this letter in mine. I was about to send it to Your Majesty when I received Your Majesty's letter. At the same time I wished to inquire what I should do for I only wish to act in accordance with your wishes. I am sending Monsieur de Marmol to bring back the Prince to me, since Your Majesty allows me to do this. I am not well enough yet to travel so far as Laeken. At the same time if there is anything Your Majesty wishes me to do I am better and I will always do your pleasure. Nothing could make me happier than the thought of living quietly near Your Majesty and I beg you to believe that this will always be the wish of your daughter

HORTENSE.

If I receive any message I will send it immediately to Your Majesty¹

Plombières July 10th 1810

Hardly had this letter been sent when Monsieur de Spaen arrived at Plombières with a message from the Conseil Provisoire de Régence. Hortense at once communicated these documents to the Emperor

SIRE,

Monsieur de Spaen member of the Corps Législatif has just arrived. He was sent by the Regency from Amsterdam to inform me of the King's abdication. I am sending everything to Your Majesty and await instructions.

Please accept Sire the assurance of the tender and affectionate sentiments of your daughter

HORTENSE.²

Plombières July 11th 1810

¹ Published by Ch. Naudry in *Le Curieux* No. 40 page 247 and by André Dubosq in *Louis Bonaparte en Hollande* page 71. The original autograph letter is preserved in the Archives Nationales AF IV 1720.

² Original autograph letter signed, in the Archives Nationales AF 3 1710 (second file) — This file also contains the original letters written to the Queen by the President and members of the Corps Législatif, the Conseil Provisoire de Régence, the proclamation of Louis to his subjects and the letter written by the King to the Emperor.

The Emperor's plans were soon modified. After having on July 9th signed the decree uniting Holland with France, he sent Lauriston on the 10th to bring the Grand Duke of Berg back to Saint-Cloud where his little brother was already. Before having had time to receive any answer from Hortense he wrote to her as follows :

MY DAUGHTER,

I sent you a mail the day before yesterday As you have not written to me it would seem as though you had not heard from Holland, and have not been informed of what has happened there

I am sending Comte Lauriston, my aide-de-camp, to fetch the Grand Duc de Berg, whom the King abandoned at Haarlem in the utmost destitution. Lauriston has orders to bring him back to Paris Take the waters in peace, and when your season is finished return to Paris

Your affectionate father,

NAPOLEON.¹

Rambouillet, July 10th, 1810.

In the meanwhile the documents that Hortense had received and sent on to her stepfather, had arrived at Rambouillet. The Emperor writes :

MY DAUGHTER,

I received your mail of the 11th. I see that the letters from Holland have reached you at last We have no news of the King We do not know where he has retired to and cannot understand this whim of his at all Monsieur l'archi-trésorier² should have reached Amsterdam by now, and the decree of union should already be known there I send you the letter I think you ought to write to the *Président du Corps Législatif* and the *Président du Conseil de Gouvernement* In these letters you will not give them any title

Your affectionate father,

NAPOLEON.³

At Rambouillet, July 13th, 1810.

¹ Original signed

² Lebrun, Duc de Plaisance

³ Published in the *Correspondance*, Vol XX, page 540, and in Félix Rocquain *Napoléon et le Roi Louis*, page 289 This volume also contains the text of the letters the Queen was to write the Dutch authorities The original is signed and is in the archives of Prince Napoleon

Hortense conformed with the Emperor's wishes, but after having addressed to him a letter of presentation in favour of the Dutch deputy de Spaen she expressed the wish to join her mother at Aix

MY DAUGHTER,

I have received your letter of the 15th. I have also received the note about Monsieur de Spaen. I have had his name placed on the list of candidates. I see no reason why you should not go to Aix. This would please the Empress who I believe is planning to spend some time at Geneva after having taken the waters.

I expect Napoleon here to-morrow. I do not know where the King is. You may be quite sure that the only feeling with which his conduct inspires me is one of pity.

Your very affectionate father

NAPOLÉON¹

At Saint-Cloud July 10th 1810

The next day there was another letter in which the Emperor gives the mother news of her sons

MY DAUGHTER,

Napoleon has just arrived. I hasten to tell you. I have put him and his brother at Saint-Cloud in the *Pavillon d'Italie* (it is the building you knew as the *pavillon de Breteuil*).

I have just received official news of the King. He has passed through Dresden on his way to the springs of Toeplitz in Bohemia. They tell me he behaved very badly during the last days he was in Holland, and that he has carried off more than 10 millions.² This last detail grieves me deeply.

Your affectionate father,

NAPOLÉON³

Saint-Cloud July 20th, 1810

And here is the last letter written at this period. Since the end of July Hortense had been at Aix

¹ Original signed.

² This accusation was false. Louis before leaving Holland had only sold a portion of his estates in that country and put his diamonds in a place of safety. See Frédéric Masson *Napoleon et sa famille* Vol. 3 page 171.

³ Original signed.

MY DAUGHTER,

I have just received your letter of August 6th I am glad to hear that your health is improving Your children came to see me yesterday and are well.

Your affectionate father,

NAPOLEON.¹

Trianon, August 10th, 1810.

MONEY MATTERS

The following letter was published in the *Correspondance*, Vol. XX, page 159, dated January 22nd, 1810. The original, merely signed by the Emperor, preserved in the archives of Prince Napoleon, bears the same date. But this is certainly a slip on the part of the secretary and the date should be January 22nd 1811. Indeed this letter cannot be ascribed to 1810, as at that time Napoleon had just frustrated the demand for a separation which, at the request of Hortense and Louis, he had submitted to the family council. Moreover the Emperor had not then given up hope of seeing a reconciliation between the King and Queen, and in fact such a reconciliation did take place in April 1810. In 1811 on the contrary, following the protest issued by Louis on December 30th, 1810, the Emperor was actively engaged in fixing the future status of the Queen and assuring her means of support. And then our hypothesis is strengthened by a comparison of the following letter with that written to Comte Daru, January 22nd, 1811 and published by Monsieur Léon Lecestre, *Lettres inédites* loc. cit. Vol. II, page 109, in which the Emperor says: "I have had St. Leu sequestered. My intention is to have you send for Queen Hortense's man of business, and that you hand over this estate to him in order that the Queen may have full possession of it and make such arrangements regarding it as she sees fit."

The Emperor had already given the Queen possession of

¹ Original written and signed by the Emperor It was published by Monsieur de Brotonne in *Dernières Lettres*, Vol I, page 502

Saint-Leu, by the decree signed at Saint-Cloud, July 20th, 1810 (AF IV, plaque 3,546) In the present instance it is the full ownership which he bestows upon her

MY DAUGHTER,

I have given orders that Saint Leu is to be handed over to you. Tell your man of business to take possession of this estate on your behalf and put it to rights. Make any arrangements there you please and change any of the household whom you do not like. You need a place in the country you could not find a more agreeable one than Saint-Leu.

Your affectionate father,

NAPOLÉON

Paris January 22nd, 1810

Monsieur Pierlot, receiver-general of the Aude and director of the Bank of France, who had been appointed steward of the Empress Joséphine's household after the divorce, was forced to suspend his payments. He owed Hortense several hundred thousand francs. Napoleon was obliged to interfere. It is to these financial difficulties that the following letter refers.

By the decree of December 26th, 1810, the Emperor had granted Hortense an income of 500,000 francs to be deducted from the two millions per year which the senatus-consulte of December 13th, 1810, had allowed to Louis. But the King, having by his letter of December 30th, 1810, refused this allowance, Napoleon, by a decree signed at Saint-Cloud, April 24th, 1811, the day following that on which he wrote to the Queen, accorded to Hortense complete possession of this pension 'until such time as King Louis returns to France'

MY DAUGHTER,

Pierlot having gone bankrupt will you suggest somebody to be put in charge of your affairs? I have made a decree to settle the question of your allowance. Thus you will come into complete possession of the 2 millions. Select an intendant in order to have your estates properly organized.

You will restore to my treasurer Estève whatever you may have received from the Crown so soon as you take possession of

your allowance I except from this the sums paid out for the Grand Duc de Berg, who will continue to receive this income, and I desire that it be spent entirely for him.

Your affectionate father,

NAPOLEON.¹

Saint-Cloud, April 23rd, 1811.

¹Colonel Baron Moisson Devaux was appointed steward to the Queen by the decree of June 18th, 1811.

(Continued on page 255 of Volume II)

NOTES

CHAPTER I

(Pages 29-41)

Page 30 line 5 François de Beauharnais a member of an old count family in the province of the Orléannais was born February 9th, 1714 at La Rochelle. He, like his father entered the navy and he was in command of a squadron when in November 1756 he was appointed by letters patent Governor and Lieutenant General of the islands of Martinique, Guadeloupe Marie Galante, Saint Martin, Saint Bartholomew La Désirade Dominica, Sainte-Lucia, Grenada, Les Grenadins Tabago Saint Vincent Cayenne and its dependencies and the Leeward Isles. He was created Marquis de la Ferté-Beauharnais by letters patent in July 1764. In 1751 he married his cousin Marie Anne-Henriette de Pyvart de Chatulle, born in Blois, March 17th, 1722 died in Paris 1767. The Marquis de Beauharnais died at Saint-Germain-en Laye on June 11th, 1800. See L. de Bretonne *Les Bonaparte et leurs alliances* Paris Champion, 2nd edition, 1901 in - octavo, page 70

Page 30, line 13 The Marquis de Beauharnais really had three sons, but the eldest was born and died in the same year 1753

Page 30 line 15. March 28th 1760 Queen Hortense left this date blank Alexandre-François-Marie de Beauharnais, born at Fort Royal (Martinique) was privately baptized on June 10th, 1767 by Frère Ambroise curé of the parish of Saint Louis de Fort Royal. Ceremonial christening was performed in the church of Saint-Sulpice in Paris, January 15th 1770. He was musketeer in the 1st Company March 10th 1774. Second Lieutenant in the Regiment of the Sarre-Infantry December 8th 1776, commissioned Captain, June 3rd 1779. Captain in the Royal-Champagne Cavalerie June 2nd 1784. Major en second to the 51st Regiment of Infantry May 1st, 1788. Adjudant Général Lieutenant-Colonel August 25th, 1791. Adjudant Général Colonel May 23rd 1792. Maréchal de Camp September 7th, 1792. Lieutenant-Général March 8th 1793. General in-Chief provisionally May 23rd 1793 definitely May 30th 1793. He was appointed Minister of War June 13th 1793 but refused the appointment. He resigned his commission Aug., 1793. Guillotined July 23rd, 1794. (*Archives administratives de la Guerre D'après Beauharnais*)

Page 30 line 18 What actually took place was that after the departure of his father (April 1761) Alexandre remained several years in Martinique being taken care of by Madame Tascher de la Pagerie. He returned to France towards the end of 1767

Page 30, line 23 The date of Joséphine's birth has been the subject of numerous controversies. The *Almanach impérial* is partly to blame for this, for it gives the date as June 24th, 1768, which would have made her eleven years old at the time of her first marriage. This date is repeated on her death certificate, drawn up at Rueil.

Queen Hortense agrees with the official version, which declares that Joséphine was the youngest of the three sisters. A little further on, however, she contradicts herself by saying that Joséphine was fifteen when she married. This places the date of her birth in 1764. The truth is that Joseph Gaspard Tascher and Rose-Claire des Vergers de Sanois, his wife, had three daughters. First, Marie-Joseph-Rose, known as Joséphine, born at Trois-Ilets, June 23rd, 1763, second, Catherine-Désirée, born at Trois-Ilets, December 11th, 1764, died at Trois-Ilets, October 16th, 1777. It was to the death of this sister that the family tradition, repeated by Hortense, refers (the letter asking for her hand is dated October 23rd, 1777. It was published by F. Masson, *Joséphine de Beauharnais*, page 103), third, Marie-Françoise, born at Trois-Ilets, September 3rd, 1766, died there November 5th, 1791.

Page 30, line 33 Queen Hortense left this in blank. The marriage took place at Noisy-le-Grand (where the estate of Madame Renaudin was situated), on December 13th, 1779.

Page 30, line 33 Eugène-Rose de Beauharnais, who became Prince Eugène, was born in Paris, September 3rd, 1781, at the residence of the Marquis de Beauharnais, his grandfather, in the Rue Thévenot. This street has now been destroyed. The portion where the *hôtel* Beauharnais was situated was opposite the Rue Dussoubs and was demolished in 1895 to make room for the Rue Réaumur. Eugène was baptized September 4th, 1781.

Page 30, line 34 Queen Hortense was born on April 10th, 1783, Rue Neuve Saint-Charles, where the Marquis de Beauharnais, her grandfather, was then living. This street was a short branch of the Rue Pépinière, which at the time continued beyond the Place Saint-Augustin to the Rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré. The site of this house is now occupied by the Rue de la Boétie. She was baptized the next day at the Madeleine de la Ville d'Evêque (Saint-Philippe du Roule was built, but not yet consecrated), and received the names of Hortense-Eugénie. Her godmother was her cousin, Fanny de Beauharnais, and her godfather her grandfather, Tascher de la Pagerie.

Page 30, line 36 Rose-Claire des Verges de Sanois, Hortense's maternal grandmother, was born August 27th, 1736. She died at Trois-Ilets on July 2nd, 1807. Joséphine's father, who was a year older than his wife, died November 6th, 1790.

Page 31, line 8 The date of this departure is June, 1788. Hortense was a little more than five years old.

Page 32, line 4. Marion, a mulatto, to whom Napoleon gave an income of 1,200 francs on September 20th, 1807.

Page 33, line 15 François, Comte de Beauharnais, elder brother of Alexandre, and Hortense's uncle, was born at La Rochelle, August 12th, 1756. He was *surnuméraire aux mousquetaires gris*, then

second Lieutenant in the regiment of Belzunce-Dragon, August 12th, 1772. Promoted Captain February 20th, 1778. Colonel in 1785. He was *député suppléant de la noblesse de Paris* at the Etats Généraux, and took his seat Nov. 3rd, after the resignation of Lally Tollendal. *Aide-major Général* in the army of the Prince of Condé his resignation was accepted when his brother assumed command of the Republican forces. Under the Empire he was Ambassador to Etruria and Spain, and also Senator. He died in Paris at 110 Rue de la Pépinière, March 3rd, 1846 (*Archives administratives de la Guerre*).

Page 33 line 20. Now Lycée Saint Louis. The compromise between Beauharnais and his wife was that the latter should take care of Eugène till the age of five. It was shortly after he had reached this age that Beauharnais sent his son to a boarding school.

Page 33 last line. The majority of the biographers of Queen Hortense are silent as to this sojourn at the Abbaye-aux Bois. And in fact it was a rather short one. Joséphine seems to have returned to Paris from Fontainebleau in October 1791. The Abbaye-aux Bois like all other convents for women, was closed by the law of August 18th, 1792.

Page 34 line 16. Hortense is mistaken. no such decree had been passed at the time. General Beauharnais' resignation was accepted August 21st, 1793. He had been in command of the Army of the Rhine since May.

Page 34 line 20. The warrant issued by the Comité de Sûreté Générale for the arrest of Beauharnais is dated 12 ventose an II (March 2nd 1794). The arrest was carried out by Citizen Sirejean, *Commissaire du Comité* who brought back his prisoner to Paris, and placed him first in the prison of the Luxembourg and then transferred him to the Carmes, March 14th, 1794.

Page 34 line 24. In September 1793 Joséphine had rented a country house where Madame Hosten had been living at Croissy near Chatou between Paris and Saint-Germain-en-Laye. She was denounced by an anonymous letter in which the authorities were warned to be on their guard against the "former Comtesse de Beauharnais who has many connections in government circles" (*Archives nationales F7 4740*). A warrant, issued by the Comité de Sûreté Générale dated April 19th 1794 ordered the arrest of the *citoyenne* Beauharnais wife of the former general, Rue Saint Dominique No. 953, a woman called Hosten, same house and a man called Croiseuil their confederate living at Croissy near Chatou. They are to be taken to prison after their papers have been examined. (*Archives nationales Registres des mandats d'arrêt du Comité de Sûreté Générale A F 11 294 folio 227*). The search of Joséphine's house took place on April 20th 1794. The order of imprisonment of the *citoyenne* Beauharnais, suspect under the law of September 17th last year, was signed at the *Comité Révolutionnaire de la section des Tuileries* April 21st, 1794. She was taken to the prison of the Carmes where her husband was already confined.

Page 34 line 27. See in C. d'Arjaron *Hortense de Beauharnais* page 62 the petition addressed to the Convention on 2, Floral Year II by Eugène Beauharnais "aged twelve" and Hortense Beauharnais, "aged eleven" (*sic*).

Page 35, line 13 It does not seem that this order was actually given, at least not by the Convention. Perhaps it may have been enforced by some local *comité de section*. In any case it was quite in harmony with the theories of Beauharnais, an ardent disciple of Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

Page 36, line 31 Although previous authorities have not been able to determine the exact site of the house on the Rue Saint-Dominique wherein Joséphine lived for three years, the present editor of the *Memoirs of Queen Hortense* feels justified in placing it where No 226 Boulevard Saint-Germain now stands.

Page 37, line 30 The guillotine stood on the Place de la Révolution, formerly Place Louis XV, now Place de la Concorde, until 21 Prairial, Year II. At that time, in response to the complaints of the shopkeepers in the Rue Saint-Honoré it was decided to transfer it to the Place Saint-Antoine, opposite the ruins of the Bastille, but four days later this decision was revoked.

Page 38, line 14 This banker, a partner of Monsieur Vanhée, was called not Henry, as in the Queen's manuscript, but Jean-Marie-Joseph Emmery

Page 39, line 17. Queen Hortense is certainly mistaken in speaking of the Rue de Sévres. The Convent of the Carmelites and its gardens occupied a part of the large plot of ground bounded by the Rue Vaugirard, Rue Cassette, Rue du Vieux-Colombier, Rue du Cherche-Midi and Rue du Regard. An examination of the plan of Paris by Verniquet and the reconstitution of the sites made by A. Sorel, *Le Couvent des Carmes et le Séminaire Saint-Sulpice sous la Terreur*, Paris, Didier, 1863, suggests that the garden to which Hortense and Eugène were taken was that of the Filles du Saint-Sacrement, which had an entrance on the Rue Cassette.

Page 40, line 29 He perished on 7 Thermidor (note of the Queen Hortense) As a matter of fact he was guillotined 5 Thermidor, Year II (July 23rd, 1794). He and forty-eight of his fellow-prisoners had been implicated in the plot known as the Conspiracy of the Prisons. Forty-five of the accused were condemned to death and executed on the Place de la Nation, then called the *Place du Trône renversé*, to which the guillotine had been transferred on 25 Prairial, as the people living in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine would have none of it in their district.

Page 40, line 29 The original of this letter, dated 4 Thermidor, Year II, is preserved in the archives of His Imperial Highness Prince Napoleon

Page 41, line 18. Joséphine really never appeared before the Revolutionary Tribunal.

CHAPTER II

(Pages 42-53)

Page 42, line 7 Joséphine was one of the first prisoners to be released, 19 Thermidor, Year II (August 6th, 1794).

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Page 43 line 7 Joséphine had been appointed guardian of the children of Beauharnais, with Etienne-Jacques-Jérôme Calmelet as deputy guardian by the justice of the peace of the section Fontaine-Grenelle on the 27 Germinal, Year III (April 16 1795). The children were given possession of their father's estate by the decision of the Bureau du Domaine National under date of 2 Fructidor Year III (19 August, 1795) (*Archives de la Seine Fonds des Domaines carton 635 dossier 2997*)

Page 43, line 18 According to Monsieur Frédéric Masson, this dinner took place on January 21st, 1796 the anniversary of the execution of Louis XVI.

Page 44 line 3 This order is dated 22 Vendémiaire Year IV (October 14th, 1795)

Page 45 line 24. Emilie-Louise de Beauharnais, born in Paris, January 28th, 1781 was the daughter of François de Beauharnais, Hortense's uncle (see note, page 7 line 4) and his first wife François-Marie de Beauharnais. Emilie married the Comte Lavallette on May 18th 1798 and died in Paris, June 18th 1833. Her heroic conduct in taking her husband's place in prison during the Restoration and allowing him to escape is well known.

Page 46 line 20 This letter is reproduced in the Correspondence of the Emperor and Hortense in the end of this volume.

Page 47 line 15. "The son of Queen Hortense still has a little round watch which was sent to his mother by General B at this time" (Note written by Napoleon III on the Red Manuscript of the *Memoirs*.)

Page 48 line 2 Bonaparte arrived in Paris on December 5th, 1797 at 5 p.m.

Page 48 line 35. Monsieur de Talleyrand.

Page 49 line 4 This splendid fête was given on January 3rd 1798 at the Hôtel de Gallifet, Rue du Bac which was then the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Joséphine appeared in a very bad humour

Page 49, line 6 Madame de Staël had met Bonaparte for the first time during the visit he paid Talleyrand the day after his return to Paris, December 6th, 1797. He paid little attention to her. She again saw him at this ball, given in his honour. It was there that in reply to her question, "Who is the finest woman in the world now or in the past?" Bonaparte replied with a smile "The one who has had the most children."

Page 49 line 26. Caroline Bonaparte born at Ajaccio March 23th, 1782 was a year and fifteen days older than Hortense

Page 51 line 6 Napoleon at Saint Helena confirmed the mutual affection of Louis and Emilie. Speaking to Gourgaud of Madame Lavallette he said that "he had prevented her marrying Louis Bonaparte because she was the daughter of Royalist emigrants" (Gourgaud, *Saint Helena* Paris, Flammarion, n.d. in *Notes* Volume I page 489). We shall see later that in 1816 Louis still remembered his love for Emilie

Page 51, line 13. Regarding this project of marriage, see *Mémoires de Barras*, edited by Georges Duruy, Paris, Hachette, 1896, Volume III, page 141. In reply to the suggestions of Barras, who was in favour of the match, Reubel is supposed to have replied, "We are good Alsacians. We are not strong enough to compete with the daughter of Madame de Beauharnais and a Corsican stepfather." But then Barras lies frequently.

Page 51, line 36. The deed of sale of Malmaison from Lecoutoux du Moley is dated 2 Floréal, Year VII (April 21st, 1799). The Queen refers to the estate throughout as La Malmaison, but it was generally known during the Empire as Malmaison, and this is its proper title, according to the erudite curator, Monsieur Jean Bourguignon.

Page 52, line 14. The news of Bonaparte's landing at Fréjus reached Paris, October 13th, 1799. Joséphine heard of it by a note from Eugène, and at once left to meet her husband accompanied by Hortense. She took the route through Sens, Joigny, Auxerre and Châlons. But after leaving Lyons Bonaparte had gone north through Moulins, Nevers and Cosne. Joséphine did not know this till she reached Lyons. She at once returned to Paris, but did not arrive till October 16th, 1799, when Bonaparte had already been there three days. The reader will note that Hortense does not refer to the reconciliation which took place between Joséphine and Bonaparte, and which she and her brother had helped bring about.

CHAPTER III

(Pages 54-71)

Page 55, line 28. The marriage of Elisa and Félix-Pascal Bacciochi took place in 1797. The civil service was performed on May 1st, at Marseilles, the religious one at Bovisio-Mombello, June 14th.

Page 55, line 31. The marriage of Pauline and Victor-Emmanuel Leclerc had been celebrated at Montebello in September, 1797.

Page 55, line 32. The marriage of Caroline Bonaparte and General Murat was signed at the Palace of the Luxembourg in the presence of Napoleon on 28 Nivôse, Year VIII (January 18th, 1800).

Page 55, line 32. The civil marriage was performed on 30 Nivôse, Year VIII in the *temple décadaire* (presumably disaffected church) of the canton de Plailly, to which Mortefontaine was attached.

Page 56, line 32. 30 Pluviôse, Year VIII (February 19th, 1800).

Page 57, line 1. All the new occupants had this same impression. Roederer tells how one day, shortly after having moved in, he said to Bonaparte, "This is a gloomy place." He replied Napoleon, "as gloomy as I feel."

Page 58 line 21 Hortense's room, close to the Pavillon de Flore was next to Joséphine's dressing room from which, by passing through a reading room and a bathroom, one reached the bedroom of the First Consul and Madame Bonaparte.

Page 58 line 22 The apartment occupied by Joséphine was on the ground floor of the palace facing the garden between the Pavillon de l'Horloge and the Pavillon de Flore.

Page 58 line 37 Eugène had been appointed Captain in the *Chasseurs à cheval de la Garde* December 22nd 1799

Page 60 line 8 Gros, who had just returned from a trip to Italy where he had gone to select the paintings France was entitled to receive under the conditions of the peace treaty exhibited The Plague Victims of Jaffa at the Salon of 1804. The painting is now in the Louvre.

Page 61 line 12 Hortense's memory deceives her The programme of the Théâtre de la République (Opera) on 18 Vendémiaire Year IX (October 10th, 1800) was not *Darsomanie* but the first performance of *Les Horaces* a lyric tragedy in three acts by Guillard music by Porta and the ballet of *Pygmalion*

Page 62 line 4. 3 Nivôse, Year IX (December 24th, 1800)

Page 62 line 15 Joséphine wore a shawl that she had never had on before and that was the cause for her being late See *Mémoires du Général Rapp* Paris, Garnier no date, in octavo, page 21

Page 62 line 27 Her eldest son was born less than a month afterwards January 21st, 1801

Page 62 line 38. According to the *Journal de Paris* which published a list of casualties, there were 32 victims, of whom 7 were killed, 20 seriously wounded and 5 slightly injured.

Page 64 last line On January 23rd, 1803 La Fayette, as he was leaving the Ministry of the Navy in Paris slipped on the ice and broke his thigh-bone. Ten months earlier he had written to Bonaparte his letter of May 20th, 1802 which, despite his praise of the 18 Brumaire and the dictatorship brought all intercourse between the two generals to an end. See Etienne Charavay, *Le Général La Fayette* Paris, Société de l'Histoire de la Révolution 1895 in octavo page 388

Page 66 line 11 The first edition of *Atala ou les Amours de deux sauvages dans le désert*, Paris, Migneret XXIV 210 pages is dated Year IX—1801 It appeared in the spring of 1801

Page 68 line 2 Eugène had been made *chef d'escadron* of the *Chasseurs à cheval de la Garde* on July 18th, 1800.

Page 68 line 2 Louis had been appointed *chef de brigade* of the 5th Dragoons on January 11th 1800.

Page 71 line 12 Colonel Lauriston had been sent to London with the ratification of the preliminaries of the peace treaty which had been signed 9 Vendémiaire Year X (October 1st, 1801) The crowd unhitched his horses and dragged along his carriage with cries of "Vive Bonaparte!"

CHAPTER IV

(Pages 72-99)

Page 72, last line "I have just read the *Mémoires* of Bourrienne. He describes his attitude towards the Consul, towards my mother and myself quite inaccurately. It is true that at the time of my marriage he was selected to speak to me about it. This was the only occasion on which he had anything to do with our family affairs, and he says nothing about the conditions under which it occurred. He was merely secretary to General Bonaparte, who was surrounded by generals and aides-de-camp. Bourrienne was never with him on important occasions, and certainly not on 18 Brumaire. He never commented on the General's decisions. The latter would never have allowed him to do so. At Paris he never dined with us, and he only did so occasionally at Malmaison, because his wife and his children were living near by at Rueil. As soon as his work was over he would leave and join them there. The Consul invited Madame Bourrienne two or three times to dinner at Malmaison. It is clear that Bourrienne's position was an inferior one. He took orders and did not receive confidences. It is impossible for any impartial person to conceive the quantity of lies he has put into his *Mémoires*. Even in regard to quite trivial things his memory is at fault and his perfidy is concealed by a jovial manner. He can never have jotted down a note. Why should he have lied about me when he meant to say nice things about me? Probably because he remembered the remarks that were made about him or because, being anxious to appear to have been an intimate of ours, he wished to make people forget that he was considered rather ridiculous at Malmaison. I have told the whole truth about him. The Consul dismissed him on account of his speculations and replaced him by Monsieur de Méneval, who was as simple and honest as his predecessor had been pretentious and intriguing. The latter tried to make himself appear indispensable to the Consul on account of his skill in drawing up reports. All one has to do to judge what a commonplace person he really was is to read his memoirs. Like so many others he was nothing but an instrument of which Napoleon made use." (Note by Queen Hortense)

This was written after the rest of the first part of the Queen's Memoirs, and is copied in the margin of the red manuscript. The "*Mémoires de Monsieur de Bourrienne, ministre de l'Etat sous Napoléon, le Directoire, le Consulat, l'Empire et la Restauration*," appeared 1829, Paris, chez Ladvocat, 10 volumes, in - octavo. When Hortense wrote the above protest, it was not yet known that the *Mémoires* had been compiled by the Marquis de Villermarest, who had access only to three volumes of notes by Bourrienne, and had added all the rest himself.

Page 75, line 13 Until his marriage Louis had lived in the palace of the Tuileries on the Cour de l'Orangerie

Page 75, line 17 Now that we are about to consider the conjugal misunderstandings of Louis and Hortense, it is interesting to recall the Emperor's opinion on the subject. "Louis was a lad spoiled by reading too much *Jean-Jacques*. He can have been on good terms with his wife only for a few months. He was much too exacting, and Hortense too thoughtless. These were their recipro-

cal wrongs. All the same they were in love when they married, and each was the other's free choice. Hortense so kind so generous so devoted, was sometimes in the wrong. I must admit it in spite of all my affection for her and the real attachment that I know she has for me. However queer however unbearable Louis was, he loved her and when this is so, and great interests are at stake, a woman should always be mistress of herself and contrive to love in her turn" (*Mémorial*, loc. cit., 22 *Garnier* Vol. II p. 331)

Another time Napoleon said to Las Cases "Louis has his wits about him, and is not a bad fellow but a man who has these good qualities may do many a foolish thing and a great deal of harm. Louis' mind is naturally odd and eccentric, and has been warped by the study of Jean Jacques." (*Mémorial*, Vol. III p. 511.)

Again, M. Frédéric Maçon, who cannot be suspected of partiality when the brothers of the Emperor are in question, paints the King of Holland thus "This taciturn young man hid under these appearances a suspicious vanity and a jealousy uneasy and ailing like everything about him—an instability too, that made it impossible for him to follow any course for long. Withal such a mania of persecution as to deprive him at times of all sense of reality and during the attacks inspired his otherwise perfectly honest, upright soul, steeped in ideals of duty to acts of amazing duplicity which, by a well known psychical phenomenon, seemed irreproachable to his conscience." (*Napoléon et sa famille* loc. cit., Vol. I, p. 365)

Page 75, line 27 The banns were published 21 Frimaire Year V (December 1st, 1801) and the contract signed at the Tuileries on 13th Nivôse (January 3rd, 1802). It was the day after and on the same day as Hortense and Louis both say that the marriage took place at the Tuileries at 9 p.m. before Huguet de Montaran, Mayor of the 1^{er} arrondissement.

Page 75 last line Besides the persons mentioned the following also signed the *act de mariage*: Lucien Bonaparte Joachim Murat Joseph Fesch Jean Marie Portalis. On the other hand Lavallette's name does not appear.

Page 76, line 20. About eleven o'clock the wedding party arrived at the Rue de la Victoire where Cardinal Capota had been waiting for them since nine o'clock. The altar had been erected in the large drawing room on the ground floor.

Page 77 line 2. The First Consul referred to and paraphrased the line in Voltaire's tragedy *Œdipe* (Act II Scene IV) "J'ai fu des souverains et n'ai point voulu l'être." On May 29th 1801 during a performance of this play at the Théâtre-Français in the presence of the King of Etruria, this line was received with cheers by the spectators.

Page 78 line 33 April 16th 1802

Page 81 line 22 The origin of Louis's ill health, according to Doctor Cabanès, who has studied the question closely, was a form of rheumatism, which first appeared so low in several limbs in 1806. Doctor Cabanès considers there are no grounds for attributing the King of Holland's illness to a syphilitic infection as some writers have done.

Page 83, line 26 The First Consul had bought for Hortense and Louis a house which had been built for Mademoiselle Devricux, former mistress of the Comte d'Artois. At that time it belonged to Mademoiselle Lange, the actress, who had married and was then Madame Simon. Its site is now occupied by the Synagogue, in the Rue de la Victoire.

Page 83, line 30. August 2nd, 1802.

Page 84, line 11 Jean-Louis Baudeloque (One of the great lying-in hospitals in Paris now bears his name —Translator's note)

Page 84, line 21 The Queen first wrote, "I will drown myself"

Page 84, line 24 An allusion to the libellous English pamphlets regarding the relations between the Consul and Hortense before the latter's marriage. The utter falsity of these charges has been proved. Additional proof is contained in the tone of Napoleon's letters published in the present volume. In connection with this Napoleon said at Saint-Helena, "Louis knew what these stories amounted to, but his self-conceit and his queer temper were shocked by them, and he frequently brought them up as excuses for his conduct" (*Mémorial*, Garnier's edition, Vol. II, page 332)

Page 84, last line *Add in text* My nurse and my attendants exclaimed, "Look at our Dauphin" My husband did not like these exclamations and had them immediately silenced. He appeared much pleased that the child was a boy. Two days later the Consul came to see me.

Page 85, line 3 The birth certificate of Napoléon-Charles was made out on 23 Vendémiaire (October 15th), by Monsieur Isadore-Brière-Mondetour, Mayor of the *IIème arrondissement*. The child, who became Prince Royal of Holland, died May 5th, 1807.

Page 85, line 20 This visit of the First Consul and Joséphine to Louis took place April 7th, 1804

Page 86, line 7 Article 4 of Section II of the *senatus-consulte* of 28 Floréal, Year XII (May 18th, 1804) gave Napoleon the right to adopt the children and grandchildren of his brothers after they had reached the age of eighteen. Article 10 stated, "a *senatus-consulte* establishes the manner in which French princes are to be brought up"

Page 87, line 27 An account of this accident appeared in the *Gazette de France*, 21 Floréal, Year XI (May 11th, 1803). It had taken place three days earlier. In the carriage were Joséphine, Hortense, Caroline and Cambacérès.

Page 88, line 32 22 Ventôse, Year XI (Sunday, March 13th, 1803)

Page 90, line 3 Decree of 2 Prairial, Year XI (May 22nd, 1803). It applied to Englishmen belonging to the militia and over 18 years of age. The embargo placed by the British Government on French vessels dated from March 16th, 1803.

Page 90, line 27 The "hostages" were to be sent to Fontainebleau, Valenciennes, or Orleans.

- Page 90 line 33 The *Gazette de France* announces his return to Paris September 10th, 1803
- Page 92 line 22 Hortense went to Compiègne on December 1st, 1803 She and her husband lived at 9 Rue des Domeliers.
- Page 93 line 13 The marriage took place 18 Brumaire Year IX. Decaen mentions some talk of a marriage between Hortense and Moreau which the First Consul was said to have considered. Thibaudau speaks of a project for uniting Moreau and Caroline.
- Page 93 line 14 At the ceremony of the restoration of Public Worship in Notre Dame Madame Hulot and her daughter had taken the places which were reserved for Joséphine. See *Chapital Mes souvenirs sur Napoléon* Paris, Plon, 1893 in octavo page 264.
- Page 93 line 23 This scene occurred not, as Hortense thinks, at the time of the distribution of the swords of honour but when the Legion of Honour was created.
- Page 94 line 39. March 20th 1804 The Duc d'Enghien arrived in Paris between two and three o'clock in the afternoon. He was imprisoned at Vincennes at half past five.
- Page 97 line 33 In his will dated April 15th, 1821 the Emperor says, I had the Duc d'Enghien arrested and tried because this was necessary to the safety the interest and the honour of the French nation. In the same circumstances I should again act in the same way See Gourgand, *Sainte-Hélène* loc cit., Vol. I, page 189 and Las Cases *Mémoires* Vol. II page 375.
- Page 99 line 19 Jérôme had married Elizabeth Patterson in Baltimore on December 24th, 1803 The marriage was annulled by the imperial decree of March 2nd, 1805 and by *acte de l'Officialité de Paris* October 6th 1806
- Page 99 line 24 This paragraph—which should be in brackets—only appears on the green manuscript.

CHAPTER V

(Pages 100-140)

- Page 101 line 36. This remark was made at a family dinner at Saint Cloud May 18th 1804
- Page 103 line 36 Auguste-Charles-Joseph de Flahaut de la Billarderie, born in Paris, Rue de Grammont, April 21st, 1785. Son of Charles-François de Flahaut de la Billarderie but public opinion held that his real father was Monsieur de Talleyrand. After entering the navy at the age of fourteen he enlisted in the Volunteer Hussars in March, 1800 He served in a number of different regiments and his promotion was steady although not particularly rapid for the period. He acted as aide-de-camp to Murat in 1803 was made Brigadier-General in December 1812 became aide-de-camp to the Emperor on January 26th, 1813 In 1813 he received the rank of Général de division. Placed on the retired list on September 1st, 1814 he again resumed his post as aide-de-camp after the return from Elba. He was made a peer on June 2nd, 1815, and

commanded the 9th Cavalry division on July 1st, 1815. Resigned May 28th, 1817, but was recalled to the colours on November 14th, 1830 Louis-Philippe gave him a peerage on November 19th, 1831, and appointed him ambassador to Vienna on September 9th, 1841 Napoleon III made him senator on 31st December, 1852, Grand Chancellor of the Legion of Honour in January, 1864. He died at Paris, September 1st, 1870

Page 104, line 4 See "The First Napoleon, some unpublished documents from the Bowood papers," edited by the Earl of Kerry, London, Constable, 1925, in - octavo, page 218

Page 105, line 34 Monsieur de Flahaut, as is well known, was for a long time in love with Comtesse Anna Potocka, born in Tyzskiewicz in 1776, died in Paris, August 16th, 1867 But he did not meet her till 1806 at Warsaw, and the Countess did not come to Paris till 1810 The Queen here is probably referring to another lady, of whom Madame Potocka speaks as follows in her *Mémoires*, "I had heard Monsieur de F. spoken of as a very charming man, with whom one of the most distinguished of my fellow-countrywomen had been deeply in love" (*Mémoires de la Comtesse Potocka*, edited by Casimir Stryenski, Paris, Plon, 1896, in - octavo, page 100)

Page 106, line 3 Departure for Boulogne, Northern France, Belgium, the left bank of the Rhine, July 18th, 1804 Return to Saint-Cloud October 12th, 1804

Page 106, line 30 The Queen left this date blank The tomb was opened on three different occasions First in 1000 by Otho III, who left it undisturbed, then in 1165 by Frederick Barbarossa, who carried off the sword, the diadem and the marble chair in which the body was seated, and finally in 1215 by Frederick II, who gathered up the remains of the Emperor and placed them in a golden reliquary The alleged opening of the tomb by Napoleon is purely fictitious The talisman mentioned belonged till quite lately to Empress Eugénie, who, after the War of 1914, presented it to the Cathedral of Rheims

Page 109, last line Louis had left Turin, September 1st, 1804, and, travelling under the name of General Saint-Laurent, reached Paris, September 6th, 1804

Page 111, line 18 Louis had bought this house on June 2nd, 1804 The building was destroyed in 1899, and the site is now occupied by the Rue Pillet-Will The gardens extended as far as the buildings Rue Taitbout, now numbered 34, 36 and 38

Page 112, line 24 Napoléon-Louis, later Crown Prince of Holland and Grand Duc de Berg and de Clèves, was born Rue Cerutti on Thursday, October 11th, 1804, at 2 30 p m He had the title of Grand Duc de Berg et de Clèves from March 3rd, 1809, to December 1st, 1813 He married Charlotte-Napoléon, daughter of King Joseph, at Florence in July, 1823, and died at Forli, March 17th, 1831.

Page 113, line 2 The birth certificate was drawn up by Brière Mondétour, Mayor of the *II arrondissement* in the mansion in the Rue Cerutti, 2 Brumaire, Year XIII, at noon in the presence of the Emperor and Empress.

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Page 115 line 8 November 25th, 1804

Page 115 line 10 The construction of the gallery connecting the museum and the Pavillon de Flore was completed in time for the Pope's visit.

Page 115 line 16 Day of the Coronation, 11 Frimaire an. VIII

Page 115 line 37 December 5th 1804 This ceremony was originally intended to take place the day following the coronation, but was postponed on account of the Empress's fatigue.

Page 116 line 22 This ceremony took place on March 24th, 1805, at 4 p.m., in the gallery of the palace of Saint-Cloud which had been converted into a chapel. The Emperor was godfather and his mother Madame Mère godmother

Page 121 line 31 This incident took place in January 1805. The Emperor had first proposed the Italian crown to Joseph, who had finally declined.

Page 122 line 20. This is correct spelling Louise-Catherine-Eléonore Denuelle de la Plaigne born September 13th, 1787 had married at Saint-Germain on January 15th, 1803 Jean-Honoré-François Revel, who claimed to be captain in the 15th Dragoons. This person was arrested two months later for forgery. Caroline and Madame Campan placed his wife in a pension at Chantilly and her divorce was granted April 19th 1806. She remarried February 4th 1808 Pierre-Philippe Augler Lieutenant, who died in Poland in December 1812, Captain of the 7th Colossiers. She married a third time, March 25th, 1814 Charles Auguste-Emile de Luxburg, Major in the service of the King of Bavaria, and died in Paris January 30th, 1868

Page 123 line 5. Charles, called Comte Léon, was born December 13th, 1806 in the house the Emperor had given his mother No. 29 Rue de la Victoire, Paris. He had been registered as the son of *demoiselle* Eléonore Denuelle lady of property and of an absent father. He married June 1862 Françoise-Fanny Jouet, by whom he had three sons and a daughter and died at Pontaise April 14th, 1881. See Max Billard, *Un fils de Napoléon Ier d'après des documents inédits* Paris, Berger et Chasse, 1909, in - octavo.

Page 123, line 12. Napoleon always behaved very generously towards this child. In 1814 he gave him an income of 12,000 livres, in 1815 ten shares in *Canaux* (Waterways) worth 100,000 francs. In his will he bequeathed 320,000 francs to him, and instructed his executors as follows (paragraph 37 of the will) "I should be pleased to have little Léon become a magistrate if this is in accordance with his tastes. The reader will find Léon in these Memoirs in 1815, when he was brought to see the Emperor during the latter's last stay at Malmaison.

Page 123 line 24 May 16th, 1805.

Page 125, line 10. The Emperor maintained that it is easy to guess a woman's character by her way of walking. (Note by Queen Hortense.)

Page 125, line 21 The Queen frequently copied portraits of herself. One of these copies is at Malmaison.

Page 125, line 31 Imperial decree of June 7th, 1803.

Page 128, line 3. Napoleon had returned to Fontainebleau July 15th,
1805 He left again for Boulogne August 2nd.

Page 128, line 6. This ceremony like that at the Invalides (July 15th, 1804) had taken place in the previous year on August 16th near Terlincthun.

Page 130, line 35. This reception took place August 20th, 1805.

Page 131, line 15. The order was given August 21st at 3 a.m. All the troops were all aboard the boats. The Emperor then reviewed the fleet and returned at about 2 to Pont-de-Briques.

Page 132, line 19 Hortense returned to Saint-Amand August 25th,
1805. This was her husband's feast-day.

Page 132, line 31. Napoleon returned to Saint-Cloud September 3rd,
1805

Page 132, line 33. Louis had been appointed Governor of Paul's September 17th, 1805.

Page 134, line 22 Monsieur de Flahaut was mentioned in the tenth issue of Bulletin de la Grande Armée (October 22nd, 1805) for his behaviour in the combats which preceded the taking of Ulm. He was wounded November 1st, 1805, at the combat of Landau.

Page 134, line 36. A despatch from Berthier, dated Schoonhoven, December 21st, 1805, had conveyed to Louis orders to remain in Holland and to settle his army into winter quarters there. The Prince left Nimeguen January 6th, 1806, for Lunenburg, remained there two days, went back to the Hague, and embarked on the 13th for Rotterdam, whence he left directly for Paris.

Page 135, line 15 The marriage took place at Munich, Janu 17 14th,
1805. Auguste-Amélie-Louise was born June 21st, 1788.

Page 135, line 22. Article one of the contract which was signed January 4th, 1806, stipulates, "His Majesty the Emperor of the French and King of Italy will consider His Highness Eugene as a son of France" in other words as a member of the reigning family. This title was conferred by a ~~decree~~ ^{senatus consultum} of the Senate of the ~~emperor~~ ^{Empire} of France, January 12th, 1806.

Page 136, line 25. This refers to General Tapp.

[illegible]

Page 110. *Handwritten text in Arabic script, likely a continuation of the previous page.*

CHAPTER VI

(Pages 141-161)

- Page 141 line 8 The reception given at the Tuilleries in honour of the Dutch envoys, and at which Louis was proclaimed King, took place June 5th, 1806
- Page 142 line 24 Article 4 of the Treaty of May 24th, 1806 says, In case of the heir to the throne being still in his minority the regency belongs legally to the Queen
- Page 144 line 9 The Queen had added after "Monsieur de Flahaut the following two words, almost disguised." She afterwards scratched them out.
- Page 144 line 11 Instead of "casting aside all prudence" the Queen had first written "had made him find this means of saying good-bye to me."
- Page 144 line 27 Monsieur Frédéric Masson has fixed the date of this departure as early in the morning of June 12th. According to him the King and Queen passed the night of the 14th at Péronne, where they spent the following day leaving for Antwerp Breda and The Hague on the 17th. *Napoleon et sa famille* Vol. III page 316. In his *Documents historiques* Vol. I, page 139, Louis like the Queen, says they left Saint Leu on the 15th.
- Page 147 line 37 Hortense left The Hague on October 6th in a yacht and reached Mayence by way of Utrecht, Wesel and Cologne. She arrived on the 12th and stayed at a hotel looking out on the Cassel-bridge. Joséphine occupied the Teutonic Palace
- Page 148 line 10 You could hear the winding of the post horn a league away and there was much emulation as to who should hear them first. (Note by Queen Hortense)
- Page 148 last line. Here the Queen is mistaken. She cannot be referring to the four regiments of the *garde d'honneur* which were not formed till after the *senatus-consulta* of April 2nd, 1813. The troops to which Hortense alludes were the four companies of *gendarmes d'ordonnance* organized under the decree of October 1st, 1806. As a bodyguard for the Emperor this new formation aroused the jealousy of the Imperial Guard to such an extent that the Emperor was obliged to dissolve it July 12th, 1807
- Page 149 line 9. Charles Angélique-François Huchet de Labédovère the future Colonel of the 7th Line. Born April 7th, 1783 entered the service 1806 In that same year M. Desaunets, his former tutor writes to him "Your father desires you to write without delay to Mme. de Souza (the mother of Flahaut) who complains of having no news of you. It is to her that you owe all the interest that the Queen of Holland takes in you"
- Page 151 line 24. On January 12th, 1807, about half past four p.m., a vessel loaded with 140 barrels containing 37 000 lbs. of powder had exploded on one of Leyden's principal canals, situated in the handsomest quarter of the city. The great majority of the houses were overthrown and almost all the others damaged.
- Page 151 line 33. The Dutch newspapers announced the sum given by the Queen as 10 000 florins.

CHAPTER VII

(Pages 162-174)

Page 162, line 20 The Crown Prince died at midnight on the night of May 4th-5th, 1807, at the royal palace at The Hague after six days' illness. Napoleon on June 4th, opened a competition with a prize of 10,000 francs for the best remedy for diphtheria. Eighty-three memorandums were presented to the jury at the Institute, but none of them had much merit.

Page 164, line 20. Hortense arrived at Caunterets June 18th, 1807.

Page 168, last line This excursion took place July 25th, 1807. The Queen was accompanied by the guides Clément Lacrampe and Martin, to whom she afterwards presented a commemorative medal. In spite of what she says, the Queen did not reach the Vignemale, that is to say the peak of Pique-Longue, which was never climbed until 1837. Nevertheless the excursion as made by her party had only twice been carried out when she succeeded in crossing the mountains at this point.

Page 169, line 33 "Queen Hortense, who walked like a roe, had won the admiration of the guides" (Duchesse d'Abrantès)

Page 169, line 38 The inn at which she stopped has to-day become the Hôtel des Voyageurs, now (1927) managed by the great-grandson of the proprietor in 1807, Monsieur Vergez-Bellou.

Page 170, line 11 This farm, still known as Queen Hortense's Grange, is about an hour's walk away from Caunterets, at an altitude of 1,215 metres, on the road to the Riou Pass.

Page 170, line 22 This statement of the Queen's is particularly important since it puts an end to the scandalous stories regarding the birth of Napoleon III, who was born April 20th, 1808, eight months and eight days after the reconciliation of August 12th, but we have the attestation of the accoucheurs, Baudeloque and Corvisart, that he entered the world before his due time, and it was necessary to bathe him in wine and wrap him in hot cotton wool. See, too, the letter of Louis to Hortense "On the 12th of August, 1807, I met you at Toulouse and clasped you in my arms."

Page 171, line 36 The Emperor here refers to a light opera, now entirely forgotten, but very popular during the whole of the Empire, *Ninon ou la Folle par amour*. The music was by Delayrac, the words by Marsolier de Vivetières. The first performance had been given in Paris May 15th, 1786.

CHAPTER VIII

(Pages 175-186)

Page 177, line 30 *Voyage nomade* The Editor has not been able to find any mention of this "machine" in either the books or news-

papers of the epoch, but the date and the interest of the Emperor lead us to suppose that this attraction was a reproduction of Cugnot's steam carriage, the precursor of the motor-car

Page 179 line 10. This ball was given at the Palace of the Elysée, September 1807. The civil marriage of Prince Jérôme had taken place August 22nd and the religious ceremony the following day in the Tuilleries chapel. He married Princess Catherine of Wurtemberg

Page 179 line 25. This refers to Prince Leopold-George-Christian Frederick of Saxe-Cobourg, the future Leopold I. King of the Belgians. Later the reader will see how grateful he showed himself for the Queen's welcome of him during his stay in Paris and how generously he defended her cause in 1814. Napoleon, when at St. Helena, refers to this visit, saying Prince Leopold was one of the handsomest men in Paris at that time. He played a part brilliant and charming at the Masked Ball given by the Queen of Naples. See Barry E. O'Meara, *Napoleon en exil ou l'Echo de Sainte Hélène* Brussels, Arnold Lacrosse, 1813, 2 vols., in - octavo Vol. II, page 31

Page 179 line 26. Ferdinand Jean Joseph brother of Francis II of Austria, was born in Florence, May 6th, 1769. He became Grand Duke of Tuscany (Ferdinand III) in 1790, Grand Duke of Würzburg in 1805. He recovered Tuscany in 1814 and died at Florence, June 18th, 1824.

Page 180 line 15. The Emperor returned to Paris, January 1st, 1808, at 9 p.m.

Page 184, line 26. The Emperor left April 2nd, 1808.

CHAPTER IX

(Pages 187-205)

Page 187 line 2. At 1 a.m. at the Rue Cerutti. This child (Charles Louis-Napoléon) was the future Napoleon III.

Page 187 line 22. The Queen's doctor was Baudeloque, as on the previous occasions. At the birth of each child, Baudeloque received 10,000 francs in bank notes enclosed in a gold box adorned with diamonds and worth another 10,000 francs.

Page 190, line 13. In her novel, "*Eugène de Rothelin*" which appeared in 1808 Madame de Souza, Monsieur de Flahaut's mother who had remarried, makes her heroine, Athénais, utter a similar confession to the hero, Eugène. Her son wrote to her that he recognized himself in the character of Eugène, and that Athénais was the Queen. But he pointed out that in the novel, Eugène asks Athénais to tell him her troubles, whereas Hortense had come to him and confided the story of her life without being asked. See Earl of Kerry *The First Napoleon* loc. cit., page 236

Page 190, line 24. Since the month of November 1806 Monsieur de Flahaut had been just as much in love with the Countess Polocka.

- Page 193, line 38 Moreover Napoleon was displeased with his brother at that time for having refused the throne of Spain, which had been offered to him in a letter of March 27th, 1808.
- Page 194, line 12. The Queen received 480,000 francs a year for herself and her son, plus 120,000 francs for her private expenses
- Page 195, line 22 In spite of the Queen's refusal Decazes remained in Paris and sent to Louis secret reports, which he had the imprudence to entrust to the post Napoleon was informed of them, and on October 15th, 1808, sent him word to quit Paris within twenty-four hours
- Page 196, line 21 The Queen is constantly defending her mother against the charge of extravagance
- Page 196, line 23. The Emperor left Saint-Cloud September 22nd, 1808
- Page 196, line 37 Voltaire, *Cædipe*, acte 1, scène 1, 1⁶le de *Philoctète*. The performance took place October 4th, 1808.
- Page 196, line 39 No doubt we have here an allusion to Alexander's passion for Marie-Antovna-Narychkine (born Princess Tchetwerinski), which lasted till 1818 But the statement that it had already lasted fifteen years in 1809 is slightly exaggerated According to His Imperial Highness Grand Duke Nicolas Nikhailowitch (l'Empereur Alexandre Ier, Saint-Peterbourg, Manufacture des Papiers de l'Etat, 1812, in quarto, Vol I, pages 48 and 56), the beginning of this liaison dated only from 1804.
- Page 197, line 5 Prince Napoléon-Louis was created Grand Duc de Berg and de Clèves by the decree of March 3rd, 1809 Murat had given up this Grand Duchy by the treaty of July 15th, 1808, which assured him the throne of Naples
- Page 200, line 14 Talleyrand, who had been appointed *vice-grand électeur*, August 10th, 1807, had been replaced at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the preceding day by Champagny, who was later Duc de Cadore On January 28th, 1809, Napoleon, in the course of a violent scene with Talleyrand, called him a coward, a thief and a disloyal man On the 30th, Talleyrand was removed from his position as Grand Chamberlain
- Page 201, line 9 The Emperor arrived in Paris in January, 23rd, 1809
- Page 201, line 12 The first edition of "*Delphine*" appeared in December, 1802. Delphine was a portrait of the author, Madame de Staël, and "Madame de Vernon, a hard, cold woman, who did not believe in anything, who was unscrupulous, and only admired success, but who, for all that, possessed an irresistible charm," was the former friend of Madame de Staël, M. de Talleyrand, who had since deserted her He revenged himself by the following epigram "People say Madame de Staël has put us both in her novel However, she has disguised us both, for, in the book, we are both women." Paul Gautier, "*Madame de Staël et Napoléon*," page 103
- Page 203, line 30 April 13th, 1809, at 4 30 a m
- Page 204, line 33 Refers to the battle of Sacile (April 16th, 1809) Eugène, who had been obliged to retire from the Isonzo towards

Sacile, was defeated by Archduke Jean of Austria, near this city and forced again to retreat.

Page 205, line 7. The Viceroy's army joined that commanded by the Emperor at Ebersdorf, May 29th, 1809.

CHAPTER X

(Pages 206-215)

Page 206, line 11. June 14th, and July 6th.

Page 206, line 20. Attempt made by Frederic Straas at Schoenbrunn, October 12th, 1809.

Page 207, line 14. Marie Louhenska, Countess Walewska. While the Emperor was staying in Vienna, she lived in a house which had been arranged for her near the park of Schoenbrunn.

Page 207, last line. Early in October 1809.

Page 208, line 13. Josephine did not arrive at Fontainebleau till 6 p.m., nine hours after the Emperor who rebuked her for the delay.

Page 208, last line. This may refer to Madame de Barral. Her husband was Chamberlain to the King of Westphalia and she was twenty-eight years of age in 1809. She died in 1861.

Page 209, line 26. The Emperor and Empress left Fontainebleau November 14th, and returned to the Tuileries.

Page 209, line 20. The rest of the account of this incident, and the following one, allows us to place them as having occurred on November 30th, 1809. We know that on that date Josephine fainted while she was alone with the Emperor in their drawing room after dinner. The Emperor, aided by Rumet, was obliged to carry her to her room, which was on the ground-floor of the Palace, and he sent for Dr. Corvisart and Hortense to come to the Tuileries.

Page 210, line 11. The Emperor could never endure the sight of emotion, particularly in women. He dreaded the interview with Queen Hortense. She knew him too well to try to melt him. She went into his room resolved to preserve an air calm. The Emperor who had not foreseen this attitude began harshly. He cried a great deal, recurring to the thought that she would not care for him any longer and paying no attention to what the Queen said to convince him." *Comte de S. Antune, Récit de Paris*, June, 1925.

Page 212, line 6. The despatch left Paris November 26th. England received it at Milan December 22d, and left for Paris the same day.

Page 214, line 1. According to the Queen's account, this lunch took place November 30th, but she may have been mistaken by two or three days.

- Page 215, line 31. Madame Mère lived at the *Hôtel de Brenne*, now *hôtel du Ministère de la Guerre*, 14 rue Saint-Dominique.
- Page 216, line 20 Grand reception at Malmaison December 1st; the Te Deum at Notre Dame December 3rd, review of the troops at the Tuileries and reception at the Hôtel de Ville, December 11th, reception at Grosbois, December 11th; formal reception at Court December 14th, 1809
- Page 217, line 3 The family assembly during which Napoleon and Joséphine signified their mutual acceptance of a divorce took place at 9 a m The Privy-Council met at 10 to draw up the text of the *senatus-consulte*
- Page 217, line 12 The exact phrase is. "She adorned fifteen years of my life, the memory of that will always remain inscribed in my heart"
- Page 217, line 29 Hortense's memory is here at fault It was December 16th, the day after the scene she has just described that Eugène went at 11 a m to the Senate, where he presided, then sitting and read the speech which Maret had given him already written out in full He, however, modified it considerably. The *senatus-consulte* was adopted by 76 for, 7 against, and 4 blank ballot papers, 87 members being present.
- Page 217, line 36 Joséphine left the Tuileries on December 16th at 2 p m in the pouring rain She drove away in the court carriage *l'Opale*, now preserved at the museum of Malmaison.
- Page 218, line 12 The Emperor left the Tuileries December 16th, at 4 p m, for the Trianon, where he spent a week "in utter and most unusual listlessness" (*Méneval Mémoires*, Vol. II, p. 295).
- Page 219, line 4. The Palace of the Elysée had been given her as residence in Paris by the decree of December 16th, 1809.
- Page 221, line 2. January 28th, 1810.
- Page 221, line 22. March 11th, 1810.
- Page 224, line 10. The Emperor arrived at Compiègne March 20th, 1810.
- Page 225, line 37 Francis I, who was three times left a widower, married four times
- Page 227, line 15 Three tents had been erected about seven miles from Soissons, where the first meeting of Napoleon and Marie-Louise was to take place in accordance with the ceremonial used at the time of the arrival of Marie-Antoinette The Emperor and Empress were to meet on March 28th, but on the previous day Napoleon left Compiègne at noon, met Marie-Louise in front of the church at Courcelles, and brought her back directly to Compiègne, omitting Soissons entirely. They arrived at the palace at 9 30 p m The Queen of Naples had gone to meet the new Empress at Braunau.
- Page 227, line 34. The Emperor and Empress left Compiègne March 30th at noon, and arrived at Saint-Cloud at 5 15 p m

Page 227 line 36 The wedding party left Saint-Cloud April 2nd for Paris, where the religious ceremony was celebrated by Cardinal Fesch on the same day

Page 228 line 4. The first stone of the Arc de Triomphe was laid August 15th, 1806 before the plans for the structure had been decided upon. In 1810 only seven courses of masonry were above the level of the ground. On these a model of the complete edifice was erected in scaffolding covered with sail-cloth.

Page 228 line 5 We must not be surprised that the Queen says would produce later for in 1815 work was stopped on the Arc de Triomphe and Louis XVIII even contemplated the destruction of what had already been built. Work was not resumed till 1823. Consequently when the Queen wrote the above in 1820 it seemed possible that the edifice would never be completed.

Page 228 line 14. The altar was erected in the "Salon carré" of the Louvre.

Page 229 line 16. Monsieur de Flahant, who had been wounded in the combat at Ess, was at that time in Paris, staying with his mother Madame de Souza.

Page 229 line 32 April 9th 1810 After the marriage and a short stay at Saint-Cloud, Napoleon and Marie-Louise had returned to Compiègne, where they arrived April 5th.

Page 229 line 39. April 11th, 1810.

Page 230 line 9 April 14th, 1810

Page 232 line 21 Royal palace built by William III and situated 29 kilometres to the north-east of Amsterdam.

Page 232 line 32 We have been unable to find the text of this letter from the King, but the Queen's reference to it puts an end to the story that she had left Loo secretly and without her husband's knowledge

Page 232 line 37 This departure took place June 1st, 1810.

Page 233 line 25. This reception took place July 1st, 1810 at the Italian Embassy then located in the Rue de la Chaussée d'Antin. Prince Eugène's wife, who was *en route* at the time had remained in the room where the fire broke out, and was only saved by her husband's presence of mind, which enabled him to discover a secret door

Page 233 line 32 On hearing of the Emperor's order (June 24th, 1810) that the French troops were to occupy Amsterdam, Louis drew up his act of abdication, a message to the *Corps Législatif* and a proclamation to his subjects. At the same time he wrote to his brother The Queen first heard of this by a letter from Madame de Boubers, then by a letter from the King in which he said "The Regency belongs to Your Majesty by right."

Page 233 line 38 Louis signed his abdication at Haarlem. During the night of July 2nd 3rd, a little after midnight, he had left for an unknown destination, accompanied by two aides-de-camp and his valet.

Page 234, line 18. Contrary to the impression given by the Queen's Memoirs, the *Conseil de Régence* had not proclaimed the new king. All the same, the decree dated Amsterdam, July 3rd, by which the Conseil was formed, was issued in the name of Napoléon-Louis. Holland was annexed to the Empire by the decree dated from the palace of Rambouillet, 9th July, 1810.

Page 234, line 27 On leaving Haarlem, Louis avoided Amsterdam, and travelled by way of Naarden and Osnabruck to Dresden, where he arrived July 9th.

Page 234, line 39. By a *senatus-consulte*, dated December 13th, which appeared in the *Moniteur* of the 15th, Napoleon allowed Louis to retain the title of King and bestowed an allowance on him, which he refused, handing over all his estates to the Queen by a deed signed December 30th, 1810.